

# MACLEAN'S

## A FAREWELL TO ARMS

The battle over destroying chemical weapons in Oregon

## UNFRIENDLY FIRE

U.S. forces hunker down in Baghdad

## Q&A: STEPHEN HARPER

The Alliance leader takes on the federal Liberals

# Unplugged

At 4:11 p.m. on Aug. 14, the power went off for 50 million Canadians and Americans. Can we stop it from happening again?



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## THAT POWERLESS FEELING

In a time of crisis we can measure the worth of people—and Canadians did well

**THERE CAME A MOMENT** last Thursday night, halfway down Highway 401 en route to Niagara, when I wondered if I'd come upon a mirage, like a floodplain in the desert who hallucinates the image of an oasis. After hours of driving past usually bright places like Hamilton, Belleville and Trenton—a landscape now lit only by the flickering headlights of a few dodgy, desperate or irrevocably maddened—my wife, kids and I rounded a curve and came upon a series of red lights, brightly shining, neatly ordered lights. Ahead the largest power failure in the history of North America, had one tiny community escaped? The answer, of course, was no—a group of us nearly as two dozen motorists had pulled into a roadside trucker's stop, lights on, beer engines off. With rising gas pumps west of Quebec but down by the power failure, there was nothing to do but sit.

No gas pumps, no lights, no TV, no news coverage, as anything else that depends on the power lines suddenly, millions of Canadians and Americans dropped of those issues were irrelevant of how quickly and easily we can be stripped of the tools and resources that keep everything lit, humming smoothly in a society that tends to look relentlessly forward rather than back—as if to be almost dismissive of our past—the great power outage of 2003 was a startling reminder of our fragility. A century ago, a day without power might have gone largely unnoticed by many people, 60 years ago, power outages and blacked-out cities became of the Second World War were commonplace. This time three years ago, it likely never would have occurred to most people to wonder if the root cause was an act of terrorism. But in the post 9/11 world, that was the first thought that sprang to many peoples' minds.

Ever since that day, North Americans have had an awareness—at least in the back of their minds—that we're not so self-sufficient as we thought. This year, we've faced everything from war overseas to SARS, West Nile, the threat of

road cow disease, first in Western Canada, flooding in Quebec—and now this. It's a curious element of human nature that when crisis hit, we recognize their gravity only when small rituals of daily life are taken away, or cut in double.

Unexpected events are also when you realize the worth of people—and a great positive of two weeks without so many posed that our worth with high marks. At Maclean's, I can say with complete lack of self-interest (once I had very little to do with it) that our staff earned enough. As I thought more to you despite the fact that our main editorial office and printing plant were knocked out of commission at precisely the most critical and busiest part of our editorial and production process. Nonetheless, Deputy Editor Peter Rogviken dispatched a team led by National Affairs Correspondent Jonathan Gathhouse and Chief Photographer Peter Berg. An Director Donna Bosgers and her team created a cover package. Production Director Sean McCloskey oversaw an emergency production plan, and Publisher Paul Jones and senior Rogers Publishing executives know how. With worked with Quebec to arrange alternative printing if needed.

All that, and our cover story itself, about Canadians reacting to hardship. There were some black marks—looking in places, maybe two deaths, and a few grounded gas station owners who used the emergency to jack up prices—but overall, the news was good. It brought to mind of my favourite songs, because of its underlying philosophy: the 2002 "Magically Elap single, It's a Good Life If You Don't Worry." Faced with a crisis, few Canadians did. Be proud.

*Anthony Wilson-Smith*

## MACLEAN'S

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## MACLEAN'S BEHIND THE SCENES



Photo: Rick H. Johnson

### FOLLOWING HIS BLISS

Betrayal. Class conflict. Gossip rivalry. Such is the stuff of John Benvenuto's first novel, *The Island Walkers* (McClelland and Stewart).

Set in small-town southwestern Ontario in the 1960s, the novel concerns a family—the Walkers—whose patriarch works in the local textile mill. The man is offered a Russian bargain promotion, but at the cost of betraying life-long friends.

"His decision impacts the entire town," notes Benvenuto (above), a Maclean's contributing editor, who has also published two books of poetry and a play. "It's a novel about the community, its class structure and inter-relationships, among other things." Benvenuto spent six years writing the novel, which is due in early September. (It will also be published in the U.S. and Brazil.) He admits to moments of self-doubt during the lengthy gestation period. "There are times when you think it will never happen. And when you finally hold it in your hands, the moment has a dream-like quality about it."

Since joining Maclean's on a part-time basis in 1991, Benvenuto has reported primarily on Canadian literature and theatre. His long-time love of the theatre—he once considered becoming an actor—is reflected in his next novel, *North*, which includes a major character who's an actress. "It deals with the question of what is role-playing and what is real," he explains. "Human social life involves a lot of role-playing, so it's an issue that everyone can relate to."

Benvenuto says he's delighted that his part-time arrangement with Maclean's has enabled him to combine journalism with creative writing. "It's allowed me to pursue my passion for fiction and poetry and I'm very grateful to Maclean's for it."

And after receiving a substantial publisher's advance on royalties for *The Island Walkers*, Benvenuto is optimistic about delivering his second novel in a more timely fashion. "At least, I'm hoping it will take less than six years to complete," he laughs.

Visit [www.macleans.ca](http://www.macleans.ca) for recent stories by John Benvenuto, including "Art of the Ordinary", an appreciation of the late author Carol Shields (July 28), and "Passion, Mind and Healing", a review of the current Stratford Festival season (July 21, 2003). For further information about this article, contact: [behindthescenes@macleans.ca](mailto:behindthescenes@macleans.ca).

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"The message that the Aug. 11 cover image sends, at a time when abuse of animals is at an all-time high, is a very negative one." —GIVEN CHAMBERLAIN, *London, Ont.*

Letters to the Editor letters@maclean.ca

#### Getting it right

Brownfield redevelopment is the ultimate example of sensibility, and on a big scale ("Reclaiming Toxic Ground," Cover, Aug. 11). Canada has been blessed with an abundance of land, but that does not give us the right to wasteful practices. Having spent the past eight years working on major brownfield redevelopment in southern Ontario, I have seen first-hand the reasons why restoration of these lands is so important to safe and healthy communities. Credit has to be given to pioneering developers, landowners and municipalities that have overcome the many challenges associated with these former industrial lands.

David Marks, *Mississauga, Ont.*

Thanks for the this inspiring issue. It shows us that true lead can be and is being reclaimed. Focusing on good brings more good. The horror and framing story that have been the daily diet in our news for so long keep people focusing on and expecting the negative. Keep up the good news.

Barbara Williams, *Victoria*

I really enjoyed your article "Reclaiming toxic ground." However, I thought the cover photo showing a child pulling a dog's tail was absolutely horrible. Maclean's shouldn't have had this picture in its magazine, and especially not on the front cover.

Kathy Stasilewicz, *Calgary*

As a natural reader, Maclean's can influence millions of all ages in a positive manner with its front-page photos. Instead, your negative portrayal of an adult, child and dog unfortunately screams, "Bleeding animals is fun and acceptable," and "Grown-ups do not need sun hats and can disregard the effects that the sun's UV rays have on skin."

Heide T. Smith, *Calgary*

#### Hollow numbers

I wholeheartedly agree with Allan R. Gregg's view that pure demographics only provides one small part in understanding the dynamics and potential impacts of an aging



society. "Aging is an aging does," Essay, Aug. 11). There are many more forces at play than the raw numbers of people reaching their mature years contributing to the complexity of an aging society. Just as demographers can help us predict an overall aging of society, biology and past experience tell us that the flowers will likely come back in the spring. Some will be a little longer and spread. Others will feel that the sun is a lot year while still others will appear a little weaker. Why? An endless list of contributing factors—soil conditions, amount of water, how harsh a winter, one plant shading another, disease, insects and roots from different plants fighting for resources.

ALLAN R. GREGG PRESENTED SOME UNSETTLING IMAGES IN HIS AUG. 11 ESSAY on changes in an aging society ("Aging is an aging does"), writes Jeff Kinley of Lantzville, B.C. Gregg's "suggestion of today's teenagers drooling over posters of Susan Sarandon or Sean Connery in sexy poses is frightening," Kinley says. "Reclaiming society in this new way," for sure, but does it have to be the wistful stare of a 72-year-old with no shirt on? For the love of God, baby boomers, think of the children!

below the surface. Yes, we are an aging society. Yes, the garden will be back next spring. But what will it look like? That's where the complexity lies.

Glennda Parker, *Toronto*

#### Kinda the game is

The cat's paw is showing. In the Aug. 11 Scorecard item "Heartless ringer?" about putting thousands of female horses on birth control, you call these inseparable "bears." Please, they are not bears. On a recent trip to Australia we were told in no uncertain terms not to call female "bears."

Roger Weiler-Fogler, *Ottawa*

#### Less than midding

In his Aug. 11 column ("The new peace-maker"), Peter Meslinidge refers to Canada as a middle power. Of the 190 or so countries in the world we meet, surely, not among the weakest 60 in terms of military strength, thus making us a lesser power. Arms are unlikely to have any counter to ethics, being lesser is probably adequate. In the case of a national emergency, however—for example a devastating earthquake around Vancouver—Canada's military will be of questionable use. It could only muster 115 personnel to fight major forces in 8 C, and they took some days to arrive and get trained. Fortunately for us, the Americans have massive military power at our doorstep and would be here in a jiffy, fully equipped for disaster relief, while our Prime Minister would still be in his usual doldrums. Undoubtedly the relief efforts from other countries such as Japan and Mexico would likely get here before our own military had commentary.

L.M. Giesbrecht, *Burnaby, B.C.*

The American administration will love the article from Canada's most influential news anchor that implies Canada will be good to go in and peace make after supreme U.S. firmness and pre-emptive relations. Pre-emptive strikes may make more sense today in the attempt to reduce human misery resulting from stupid, unwise rule. However, Canada's message to the U.S. should be that the United Nations is the only body that has the responsibility to make this decision. Surely the leading minds through out the world will come to this realization soon as the struggles of an underdeveloped coalition of two countries become increas-

Cover



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Toronto was welcome to its SARS concert, but that doesn't elude its pathological blindness.

ingly mired in the local problems of lack of water, food, medicine and employment becoming a dangerously insecure population such as Iraq's.

Beth Bae, Portland, Ore.

#### Judging Sheila

In the Aug. 11 issue, you quote Ben Chit speaking about fairness in journalism ("Ben Chit on yaps, ketchup and the Windsor knot," People), and then Sheila Copps later proposed lower university tuition, scrap fees for new immigrants, increase foreign aid and military spending and implement a national child care program (The Week). Not only do you not provide any context for her proposed "spending agenda," but clearly you have a cartooning Myra Copps has no regard for a balanced budget or debt reduction. At least be responsible enough to ask Ms. Copps how she would pay for such expenditures—and why she believes such waste there are so important.

Laurie Cook, Wichita

#### Dream dimensions

The biggest problem with modern research into psychology, including dreaming, is that the focus is on purely the physical—everything, dreams, is reduced to chemical interactions ("The stuff that dreams are made of," Cover, Aug. 4). What is missing in the spirit part of the equation. Although it is difficult to prove, dreamlike can be life energy (spirit) or something a physical body. One purpose of the dream is to receive information from the "self" and put it into action. Dreaming may be an experience in another dimension brought to consciousness via the brain as an

interface. At least this theory is worth considering, don't you think?

Jerry Anderson, New Columbia, Ont.

#### It could take awhile

Visiting Canada, I come across the Aug. 11 issue wherein you describe how the U.S. is failing to bring peace and democracy to the people of Iraq despite having 170,000 or more troops there ("Bloodied road to peace"). The very next article describes how just one Canadian war veteran in Lanka teach about democracy and bridge the deadly divide ("War and the Canadian way"). My God, you people are slow! Please, tell us, how can we be more like you?

John Mills, Ives, Ont.

#### Logic and Iraq

Bethune Aeneas is again too clever. Her (re-origined) quip, "Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence," in her Aug. 11 column "When the media lie," may ring true but only if we postulate the absence of a logical search for evidence. Given the search, the absence of evidence is evidence of absence, instead the best possible evidence of absence. More carefully the absence of evidence (or proof) of truth is not proof of falsehood, unless there has been a careful attempt to find the evidence. This elementary logic was the rationale for UN weapons inspections: a careful search could prove the absence of weapons of mass destruction. And given the continued lack of evidence, insisting on their existence can only be dogmatism (like a belief in witches) or worse—a government covering a hidden agenda. What agenda? Speculation includes (a) est-

ablishment by Bush Jr. for insults to Bush Sr., (b) an excuse to squander tens of billions on the U.S. weapons industry, and (c) control of Iraq oil. It also includes (d) making Iraq safe for democracy and (e) ridding it of bad guys. Canada has taken the high road in all this and may be paying for it. But the price of the low road almost certainly would have been noticeably higher in blood, money, security, anxiety and disgust.

Michael Rabinov, Montreal, Que.

#### Dole Toronto: you still suck

I would never begrudge Torontonians the delights and necessity of having a SARS recovery concert for themselves ("Rock on," Concert, and "Just ignore the whining," The Back Page, Aug. 11). But like many others, I don't enjoy Toronto because of its pathological blindness, a situation Torontonians hold dear and can't understand because they're not able to perceive their own condition. Unfortunately for the rest of us, we see it clearly and must endure one of "We're an exciting world-class city" and so on.

Peter Wilson, Nelson, B.C.

As a former Torontonian living in British Columbia for 18 years, I see things from both sides now (sorry not). Yes, Canadians are a bunch of mope-loving whiners. We know we're privileged, living in such a great country. However, this whining thing has become second nature. I think it's largely due to an inferiority complex or some other psycho-social issue. Sometimes the whining is done in good fun, but most of the time it is very tiresome. I'm especially tired of the slapping Toronto natives. I still love the place and talk it up when people try to convince me, in Vancouver or when I just want to wish TO all the best. You have a lot to be proud of. I'll be back soon.

Doug Little, Vancouver

#### Who's in charge?

It seems to me that Edward L. Grossman's essay on people being secretly killed and deported is one of the greatest importance in defence of freedom, (July 28). My only concern is that Grossman refers to "Others," "Canada," and "the government," but states none does mention Jean Charest's Liberal party as the author and implementer of this whole disgusting situation.

John Beller, Summerside, N.S.



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## THEWEEK



### War on terror | Some successes, even as Afghanistan erupts in violence

When the blockade cascaded through a big chunk of the continent on Thursday, first thoughts turned to terrorism. And why not? It had been this kind of week.

Just the day before, the FBI—in concert with Israeli and Russian security agencies—arrested a British arms merchant in New Jersey. They charged him with trying to sell the latest in Russian anti-aircraft missiles to a Muslim extremist, in reality an undercover agent. For police, Hermet Lakhani's arrest was a coup, the result of a nearly two-year sting. But it also represented one of the civilized world's worst nightmare that terrorism might yet get their hands on shoulder-launched missiles that could be used near any busy airport.

Half a world away, 1,800 Canadian troops took up formal peacekeeping duties in Kabul under NATO command—there are now 13,000 international troops in Afghanistan—even as the country erupted in its bloodiest day

Newly arrived Canadian soldiers, armed merchant Lakhani on his way to court in New Jersey

in nearly a year. More than 60 people died in one 24-hour period, or violence that included a bus bombing that killed 13 near Kandahar, factional fighting in a central province, and skirmishes with Taliban or al-Qaeda guerrillas.

Success in the war against terrorism needed to be seen. Apart from the arrest of Lakhani and two money-laundering associates, the CIA and Thai authorities also nabbed al-Qaeda mastermind Rafiq bin Ibrahim, known as Hambali and accused of a string of devastating attacks in Southeast Asia. U.S. President George W. Bush said nearly one-third of al-Qaeda's top leadership has now been captured or killed. But with continued terrorist attacks in Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya and Indonesia—and a North American power grid that looks increasingly vulnerable—the approaching second anniversary of Sept. 11 is no time to get out the victory cake.



### ScoreCard

**A. Baby boom**  
WhatCan says improved parental benefits under 10 programs may have inspired modest baby boom. Maybe sports events do have place in nation's bedrooms. Grrr, you bank at SunLife? Be insuring, howabout a fix out?

**A. George W. Bush**  
First gets over 30 cm aquatic action figure. Is decided not in flight suit celebrating his Gulf War landing—no parachute or aircraft carrier. No plans for auction figure to mark his military post-landing Vietnam War so victory of Texas at National Guard.

**A. Brief nations**  
Foreign markets slowly reopening to Canada; and, now, domestic prices are rock bottom. Sorry kid, but it's September. Sorry, Fire up the coal, and accept the challenge.

**A. The terrorist**  
Definition of Canadian climate: 12 months of no sun and one month of killer tomatoes. The time is now, folks. Brief it, the leaders, under the banner, ponder the big question: a trust management, as a variable, which and about?

**A. Collier's editors**  
Yes, the baby photo has monster. But if weeks in government's race, but there is an upside. The capital one calls means no. When newspaper moves 10 after voting day. Haha. In media, Amie.

**Quote of the week** | 'I love my husband still, but that doesn't mean I have to pay for his defence.' **RABINDER KALP HANU**, wife of accused Air India bomber **Bipadman Singh Malik**, and co-owner of their successful importing and real estate business, at a hearing to determine whether the government should now pick up the cost of his lawyers.







## WORLD

**MIDDLE EAST** A vicious seven-week truce shattered on the verge of collapse after two suicide attacks by Palestinian bombers killed two Israelis and have responded by hunting down and killing a senior Islamic Jihad leader in Hebron. The bombings by two separate militant groups followed a wave of Palestinian protests over the slow release of prisoners from Israeli jails and the destruction of Palestinian homes in disputed territory. At week's end, Israel sought to keep the peace plan on track by handing over four West Bank towns to Palestinian control, but Islamic Jihad vowed revenge.

**LIBERIA** Outcast president Charles Taylor, an accused war criminal who compares himself to Jesus, finally decamped his war-torn country. In turn, the largest rebel group pulled back from the capital, Monrovia, but not before looting the port's warehouses. A West African peacekeeping force led by Nigeria and bolstered by 200 U.S. Marines and three U.S. warships offshore is trying to restore order.

**BRITAIN** A taped BBC interview with David Kelly, the weapons expert whose suicide last



**HEAT WAVE** One of Europe's worst heat waves killed up to 3,000 people in France alone, many of them elderly and trapped in overheated apartments. Compounding the problem, electricity was disrupted in weeks of almost 80° C weather proved too much for the cooling towers of nuclear plants. The intense heat devastated livestock and vineyards and set off huge forest fires from Portugal to Greece.

month triggered a political crisis, appeared to back up the broadcaster's assertions that Tony Blair's office "screwed up" the case for war against Iraq. A judicial inquiry also heard that Kelly's adviser role was more extensive than the government had acknowledged and that critical ranking into Nigerian officials shared his concerns.

An elegant Prince William floral arrangement that covers of America's *Monday Night* magazine. But at home controversy raged over his killing of a young antelope with a spear during a recent safari in Africa.

**LOCKERBIE** After 15 years of negotiations, Mohammed Gaddafi's days accepted formal responsibility for the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, and agreed to pay compensation totalling \$3.7 billion to the families of the 270 victims.

**EMIGRANTS** Automakers GM and DaimlerChrysler dropped their challenge to California's strict zero-emissions law, ensuring it will become the industry standard as it is phased in by 2018.

**AMERICANA** Investment banker Warren Buffett added General Electric to his list of investments, agreeing to oversee his team of economic advisers. In the opposing camp, former president Bill Clinton is advising re-elected Democratic Gov. Gray Davis on how to fight back.

**COLD FILES** Italy's 5,000-year-old Iceman, dug out of a glacier a decade ago, died after



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## Mansbridge on the Record



## IF OUR ACTORS RAN

Some Canadian entertainers would suit the role of star candidate

**THERE USED** to be a time when "star candidates" played a role in Canadian politics. A party could get some good press and a perceived bump in the polls if it was able to convince a nationally known figure to run in a federal election. Often, that meant someone who had already made their name at another level of politics, as when the Conservatives convinced the "tiny perfect mayor," Toronto's well-regarded David Crombie, to run, followed by the Liberals recruiting Vancouver's equally well thought of mayor, Art Phillips. Both men were seen in Parliament, both were seen in potential future prime ministers, but disappeared from the federal scene within a few years.

There has also, at times, been another kind of high-profile candidate chasing a star on the political landscape: athletes. Over the years, the Liberals have lured world they were close to persuading the great downhill skier Eric Heide to run, and the Tories have whetted some race cars once that one of the most skilled hockey players of all time, Jean Beliveau, was considering their offer. As it turned out, if either were ever thinking about it, that all they did—think. In fact, Beliveau is said to have also turned down the governor general's job at one point; that would have been some usual shoring party at Rideau Hall. But neither has he ever walked the corridors of Parliament—today stars Lester B. Pearson and Red Kelly, and figure skater Otto Jelinek, to name just three.

In Canada, it appears that's close to the end of star candidates—entirely politicians and athletes. Which brings me to Arnold Schwarzenegger, the latest in the recent string of entertainers-turned-politicians in the United States—Arnold Reagan, Sonny Bono, Gary Coleman, even that guy who used to paint power lines on Love Boat—for a while he was getting fellow legislators in the House of Representatives.

But if politics is good enough for American

actors and entertainers, who are Canada's stars? (Declaration of conflict: I'm married to an actor, but she's only interested in playing candidates, not being one.) Let me offer up a few actors: Paul Gross (*See Saw, Huckle*, *Men with Brooms*) may not have Schwarzenegger's muscles, but he's certainly a match in the political arena department, effectively leading the campaign for Ottawa to focus on Canadian television issues at least in much as it worries about tax breaks for U.S. film shooting in his country. Shirley Douglas (*Dead in Venice*) has the grace (Shirley Douglas's daughter) and the passion (especially on health care) to be a dynamic opponent for anyone in an all-candidates meeting. Jane Petersen (*Billy Bishop*, *Street Legal*) has never been shy about publishing a placard and going public on the issues that matter in Canada's downtown core and Steve Page (*Humiliated Ladies*), when there is support, Jack Layton and the issues that matter to the NDP. So there you go: Gross for Heritage, Douglas for Health, Petersen for Urban Affairs, and Page for any portfolio where he could change his lyrics to "Now I have a million dollars" to fit whatever role he desires. A lineup to supplant Hollywood could field.

The California nice that Schwarzenegger has entered is probably not the best example to use as one point in that pool of 200 candidates, including a union leader, a billboard jockey, a controversial, a news anchor, and a DJ who says running will help him meet women. But the entry of serious candidates who just happen to have made their name in entertainment shouldn't be a reason for ridicule. Who knows the stage or screen isn't so good a training ground for public service as it does in the arts, the sciences, the law, the judiciary, or wherever politicians seem to come from—the law office?

Peter Mansbridge is Chief Correspondent of CBC Television News and Anchor of The National. To comment, write to [peter@petermans.ca](mailto:peter@petermans.ca)

### Passages

**NAMED:** Authors Barbara Gowdy (below) and Margaret Atwood are among the 23 authors on the long list for the 2003 Booker prize, worth \$111,000. Atwood's latest, *Oryx and Crake*, and Gowdy's *The Romanists*, were chosen from 117 novels submitted for the



world's most prestigious literary award. A short list will be announced on Sept. 16 and the winner will be named on Oct. 14. Atwood won the 2000 Booker for *The Blind Assassin*.

**DIED:** In 1973, Mi Aronka's one-time heavy-weight boxing champion declared himself Uganda's president for life. After a failed invasion of Tanzania in 1979, the dictator—responsible for the deaths of more than 300,000—led his country and lived in exile in Saudi Arabia. Aronka, believed to be 80, died in a Jewish hospital.

**INSTALLED:** Rev. Peter Short, 55, was appointed the new moderator of the United Church of Canada. Born in Bensenville, Ont., Short is minister at Wilmet United Church in Fredericton. He is the 18th moderator of the church.

**DIED:** Though an accomplished actor and singer, Gregory Hines was best known for his tap dancing skills. Born in New York City, Hines started his career on stage at the age of five. He went on to star in such films as *The Cotton Club* and, more recently, *Hustle* and *Gladiator*. Hines, 57, died in Los Angeles of cancer.

**PREGNANT:** Grammy-winner Nelly Furtado, 25, is pregnant with her first child. The Victoria-born singer's baby is due in September (the identity of Furtado's boyfriend is being kept secret). Also expecting is *Willie Whitely* Houston and her husband Bobby Brown. Their second child is due in March 2004.

**APPOINTED:** Hereditary noble Chianun, 57, has been named the new lieutenant-governor of Newfoundland. Chianun, a well-known poet, writer and artist based in Moncton, will replace Marilyn Denchuk. Chianun, a former Liberal MLA and federal



### Justice | The second-guessing begins over Sampson's ordeal in a Saudi jail

For 31 months, Wilfrid Sampson endured solitary confinement in a windowless Saudi Arabian prison where the constant glare from a ceiling light turned his life into a seemingly endless, mind-numbing day. By his own account, the 44-year-old Nova Scotia-born businessman was also physically abused by his captors and beaten into confessing a role in deadly car bombings in Riyadh—something he later rescinded. According to documents released under the Access to Information Act last week, Sampson said visiting Canadian consulates on two different occasions that he'd been beaten. Back in Ottawa, though, the official line was to report Saudi assurances that Sampson was not being mistreated—in an attempt to secure royal clemency. It was finally granted, and on Aug. 6 Sampson was released along with a group of other foreigners. That happy news, however, also set off a storm of second-guessing. Opposition critics accused the Canadian

government of using what glove approach toward the Saudi regime—and perhaps prolonging the amount of time Sampson languished in jail. The released documents revealed that Sampson told Canadian diplomats as early as October 2001 that he had been physically abused during his first 18 months in prison, and that he blamed one of the beatings for provoking a heart attack. Another report, by a Canadian journalist who had interviewed Sampson in jail, said the prisoner told him he had been

"cuffed hand and foot and repeatedly dragged across the cell floor." The psychiatrist also reported that, in a bid to earn some semblance of independence, Sampson acted defiantly—refusing to wash, urinating in his cell and refusing the beliefs of his captors.

Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham repeated criticism of Ottawa's decision to free him, and defended his decision to release him, though he did not explicitly endorse Saudi assurances that no abuse occurred. "Any suggestion that we should have raised the temperature in this case could have, in fact, resulted in the death of Mr. Sampson," said Graham. "We acted responsibly and the media speak for themselves." Sampson, meanwhile, went to ground. Apparently livid up in a London hotel, he spoke only through family members. Along with other former detainees, he is said to be considering suing the Saudi government for wrongful imprisonment. **BRIAN HOGAN**



Graham (above) says Ottawa's strategy to free the prisoner achieved its purpose.



Cover | BLACKOUT 2013

# Unplugged

On Aug. 14, millions were left without power. Can we stop it from happening again?



Cover | >

A reversal in the flow of current—and then people across Ontario and seven states began a hot wait for power to be restored. JONATHAN GATEHOUSE reports.



As afternoon turned into evening, emergency officials braced for the worst, but were faced with remarkably few problems.

IT TOOK just nine seconds to turn the clock back a century. A voltage fluctuation in one Ohio transmission line. Then, at 4:11 p.m. on a muggy August Thursday, a faster-than-you-can-blink reversal in the flow of current, suddenly sucking away a city's worth of power from the nation's hub of the continent. Computerized safety systems kicked in and 180 generating stations across Ontario and seven U.S. states were knocked off line like tumbling dominoes. The lights went out, air conditioners stopped humming, television and radio stations fell silent, subways, street cars, and elevators shuddered to a halt. Fifty million people looked at their watches, tipped suddenly useless power switches, and began a long, hot wait for someone to restore the natural order.

Not a surprise, exactly. We've all experienced blackouts before. And as power started flickering, where 30 million citizens found themselves unplugged, the experts had long been predicting summer shortages. But as the minutes ticked by and the scope of the problem became clear—no electricity from Ontario to Windsor, major American cities like New York, Detroit and Cleveland also at a standstill—there was a hint of dread.

In Manhattan, with the second anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks looming, that fear quickly came to the surface. "The first thing I thought was, 'Oh my God, this is another terrorist attack!'" says Henry Flath, who works in the 16th floor offices of a large publishing company. "We looked out on the street, saw a lot of people outside, and couldn't figure out what was going on. We didn't have a radio with batteries, and some people got pretty scared. Some were joking and I was trying to joke, too, but underneath it all I thought, 'Geez, we could be about to be blown up in a few minutes.'"

In Toronto, thousands found themselves trapped in elevators and the city's subway. It took fire and transit officials hours to free them all. "The car became pretty sweltery, and after about 10 minutes it got really hot and very hard to breathe. There were people who were running back and forth between the cars—I think they might have been claustrophobic," says Adam Durbin, a 22-year-old student, who was heading home where the blackout hit. "I just wanted to get the hell off the train. Nobody on board was really talking about what had happened because nobody knew anything. We were all just concern-



WHERE THE BLACKOUT HIT THE HARDEST

## Unplugged: The numbers



**9 seconds**  
Time it took for the cascade to collapse the grid

**50 million**  
People affected

**8 jurisdictions**  
affected (Ontario and seven states)

**Area affected**  
by blackout:  
2,400 sq. km

missing or not passing out because it was so hot down there."

Above the surface, the scene was no less chaotic. Sidewalks overflowed with tourist users forced to take to the streets. "With all of the city's 1,773 traffic lights out of service, and streets stopped dead in the middle, vehicles gridlocked within minutes, despite the best efforts of good Samaritan citizens during traffic," TTC worker Malcolm MacPherson dangled a reflective vest and leapt into action at one busy intersection. "Amazingly, the drivers were obeying me," he says. "They'd keep their horns and some of them handed me bottles of water."

At the afternoon turned to evening, emergency officials across the blackout zone faced for the worst, but were faced with remarkably few problems. There were crimes of opportunity—small-scale looting in parts of Brooklyn, N.Y., a jewellery store robbery on Ottawa's Sparks Street, just 30 minutes after the power went off, 35 cases of looting in the capital, and 208 break-and-enters in

Among the most affected were travellers. The blackout closed or partially shut down 12 major airports in Canada and the United States. Domestic flights were cancelled, and incoming international planes diverted. Toronto's Pearson International not only had to contend with power outages, but three complete collapses of its Canada's compromised control room. The struggling airline ended up cancelling more than 500 flights, leaving thousands stranded in terminals around the world. Rick and Helen Bailey, travelling home to Edmonton after visiting family in St. John's, Nfld., were stuck at Pearson for more than 48 hours. "We were on a flight that was supposed to leave Newfoundland at 9 a.m., but the plane blew a hydraulic part so they flew a new one in," says Rick. The couple got to Toronto just as the lights went out. Their connecting flight was cancelled, and like thousands of others, they were left to fend for themselves. "We sat what about hours—they told us we're on our own." The Baileys bedded down in the terminal. "I

## By late Friday night, many U.S. cities had fully restored power, leaving Ontarians to wonder why they were still in the dark

Toronto, about six times the usual nightly total—but nothing compared to infamous blackout peaks. In Detroit, officials ordered as 11 p.m. curfew for neighbourhood delivered blame warnings of hefty jail terms for troublemakers. "Before you pick up a brick and throw it, before you spit over your, before you take a TV, you better ask yourself, is this worth 10 years of my life?" the local police chief told a news conference. But there were few arrests. The biggest challenge came in Cleveland, where 1.5 million people were left without drinking water when backup power went down at local treatment plants. The National Guard was quickly pressed into service to distribute more than 6.5 million litres to thirsty residents.

didn't even want to guess where our customers were," says Rick.

Hospital patients, people with debilitating diseases and the disabled also faced more discomfort than most, but health institutions rose—occasionally heroically—to the challenge. In Hamilton, city employees worked frantically through the first hours of the crisis to route emergency power to the Regional Cancer Centre, so that two linemen's patients could complete radiation treatments before life-saving stem cell transplants.

But mostly, people just made do. In many affected communities, a smoggy atmosphere took over. People made the rounds of neighbours to chat, took to backyards to barbecue.

*continued on page 24*



There was chaos as sidewalks overflowed and traffic quickly gridlocked. Everywhere, good Samaritans helped at intersections.

## THE DOWNSIDE OF INTERCONNECTION

**THINK BLACK HOLE,** sucking in whatever's within its grasp. The biggest blackout the continent has ever seen may have had its beginnings before 10 a.m. last Thursday. That's when several transmission lines near Cleveland lost their power, creating a domino from customers along those lines. That drew in electricity in surges from even-impinging sectors of the interconnected North American power grid. As sector after sector in turn saw their supply suddenly cut short, devastation spread, as a cascading summer afternoon, they packed in power from the next sector. The rolling imbalance eventually tripped transmission services along the grid and at 6:11, the shutdown hit its sectors, automatically switched off to protect themselves from potentially damaging surges, the power died across most of Ontario and seven states, the lights went out—and the numbers flew.

Was it terrorism? A warning giveaway in Manhattan? Fear at a Pennsylvania nuclear plant? A lightning strike on a generator in the Niagara region? Clearly, proclaimed a massive commotion and polebush, something had gone wrong in Canada. Neither, Canadian government and electrically industry leaders concurred, it had to be something in the States—or not American, maybe Ohio?

Toronto was quickly ruled out, but the big question mark remained. As both sides announced a joint task force to determine the blackout's cause, suspicions began to focus on what's known as the Late Line loop, transmits lines carrying power around that take in both countries. That would put blame Cleveland theory. But whatever the cause, are they was blame gridlock that allows gridlocks to pump power from others when they're short, and share some when they're flush, can also amplify when it's overloaded.

Ontario's electricity grid—with its 25,000 km

of high-voltage lines—is interconnected with grids covering vast parts of the U.S. and Canada east of the Rockies. Only Texas and Quebec have fully bathed their systems, rendering them immune to potentially disabling surges. Quebec has spent billions over the past decade to thicken its electricity self-reliance. Which highlights the dilemma throughout the rest of the antiquated grid—much of it requires needs updating to handle enormous and expanding energy needs. The price tag at least \$50 billion, possibly much more.

By Saturday, with New York City already back to normal, Toronto still struggled to get electricity back to some pockets. In Ontario's



The Perry Nuclear Power Plant in Ohio.

opposition parties craved that they've seen something like this coming for years. The Tory government had spent millions to fix it. It's a critical riposte—Ontario has become a regional importer of electricity, so unless its citizens suddenly develop an antinuclear taste for conservatism, the grid system has to work. Set in motion has to be called some. It's like when a government admits things aren't working, and commits the billions it'll take too many that the province's lights stay lit. ROBERT MARSHALL

Kilometres of high-voltage lines in North America.

one million



Generating power at the Niagara River gorge (left)

Number of major points where electricity sectors link

37

10,000  
Number of power plants in North America

Number that down in blackout

100

22  
that down

Number of nuclear power plants

Average age of the North American power grid

50-60 years



and silence the stars, or found refuge in a dimly lit bar and restaurant. Toronto's Rower Turnbull and his fiancée, Kelly Jones, filled a spill-proof pumping bottle with wine, logged on their bikes and cycled around the city. On the journey they discovered an impromptu picnic party with people cooling their dinner on picnic blankets in a park, and an outdoor dance in an alley of a downtown street, where a DJ was spinning records with the aid of a small generator. "You could see the top of the CN Tower and it was an amazing—the mood was on the

left and Main was on the right," says Turnbull, 34. "When the street lights came on after a few hours, a huge cheer went up and then there was this pregnant pause, and people started saying 'Turn them back off!' The response was: But I think that's what

we'll call it: the perfect night."

By late Friday night, most American cities had fully restored power, and were already returning to normal—major league baseball and NFL exhibition games were ahead as scheduled in Cleveland—leaving many Ontarians to wonder why they were still in the dark. In Toronto, where the power situation remained precarious throughout the weekend, and the venerable Canadian National Exhibition was forced to postpone its opening, Premier Ernie Eves warned of rolling blackouts and more trouble ahead.

Many New Yorkers initially thought the blackout had been caused by terrorism.

"It didn't have an abundance of power," he said. "So I encourage industry and commercial and office facilities not to use power you don't need to use." The greater threat, however, might be to Eves and his Tory government, who must call an election in the coming months. Opposition parties are already trying to make them wear the blame for the blackout, just the latest crisis to be

continued on page 26

## POWER POLITICS AND THE ONTARIO CONSERVATIVES

**WHERE WERE YOU** when the lights went out? Ontario Premier Ernie Eves was on his way to his own confirmation meeting in picturesque Galesburg East, the prelude to an election call—and now likely a victory—that seems closer to be eluding his grasp. Taking heart for not living up to the rusty Galesburg standard of immediate crisis engagement, the premier may yet be forgiven for trying to get all his facts straight before reaching out to Ontarians four hours after the massive outage. After all, Ottawa did itself no intentional favours when Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Defence Minister John McCallum, the man in charge of emergency preparedness, pointed fingers at all sorts of emergency U.S. targets. (Ontario-U.S. figures were pointing northward.)

Still, for hard-buck Ernie, Thursday's big blackout was the political equivalent of being stuck on an elevator several floors above an ominous floor. But that's what you get for playing loose with a system that needs more than crossed fingers to keep the power flowing.

When Eves, a former finance minister, took over Mike Harris's ideologically bankrupt Tory government in the spring of 1995, he also inherited its plan to privatize the power system, the once mighty Ontario Hydro. But when electricity prices spiked last year, Eves did an about-face. He ordered provincial plants and capped rates at three old levels (well below market cost) for homeowners and small businesses. And that had three consequences: it turned off investors who wanted to start power plants; it dug a huge hole in provincial finances to account for ongoing subsidies; and it gave Eves political enemies a chance to exploit the electrical grid with two large reactors out of commission that had grown awfully dependent on imported power.

All summer, as Conservative opponents tried the waters for an election call, they

prayed for deep, cool weather so as not to create the sizzling California-style brownouts that might nail bedrock voters. The damdest thing was they almost made it.

In many ways, Ernie Eves is a not-sterioran fellow from middle Ontario who seems to have the worst political luck, or judgement, of any leader in recent memory. A planned election call in the spring, on the heels of a particularly lacerated budget, was derailed over the controversy of delivering the budget away from the legislature. A summer window was shut when a second roller coaster went down in a blaze of personal averpening. And now, as the premier was contemplating the David Peterson



Eves had been waiting for a full election

first—call the role in the dog days of August so voters are spent before an April or Labour Day—he was hit by an imposing dilemma. With rolling electricity-shedding brownouts now official Ontario policy for weeks to come, Eves would appear to have little choice but to head back to Queen's Park for a full session. It's not been a particularly hospitable environment. But if you're going to redesign the province's backbone power system, it is the place to start. **ROBERT SHAPIRO**

Rank, in terms of size, of last week's blackouts: **ONE**

Second largest: 1965 northeast blackout



Police herding passengers in the New York subway in 1965 (left)

Size of last week's power saving (estimated between energy supply and demand): **5,000** megawatts

Size of power saving of 1965 blackout: 800 megawatts

Percentage increase in demand for power in the U.S. over the last decade: **30**

Increase in U.S. capacity: **15 per cent**

Estimated cost of modernizing the North American power grid: **up to \$100 billion**

fell the province's crumbling and deeply indebted electricity system.

Prime Minister Jean Charest and U.S. President George W. Bush have already pledged to set up a joint task force to probe the cause of the blackout and the security of North America's highly interconnected power grid. "You can't blame anyone," Charest said, perhaps wistfully. "Fifty million people have been involved in this problem, and what is great is the people have kept their calm and accepted it very graciously."

Critics, however, are already pointing to government policies in both the United States and Canada that have led to lax money being spent on refurbishing outdated power infrastructure. "We're a superpower with a Third World grid. We need a new grid," said former U.S. energy secretary Bill Richardson, now the governor of New Mexico. Some observers are suggesting that Ontario and the affected states need to radically rethink their systems, given the failure of multiple safety measures that were supposed to keep the lights on, and go back to smaller generating stations that service each local area. After all, this left the first line such independent utilities have blocked out eastern North America. There is even an international body—the North American Electric Reliability Council—charged with preventing such events. Its president, Michael R. Goss, said he was confused to overcome the "If we've designed the system for that not to happen, how did it happen?" he said. "I can't answer that question. I'm embarrassed." Indeed, but not exactly the ill-considered \$50 million now being hoped for.

With Andy Carline as, Warner Biles, Douglas, Jonathan Davis and Kevin Marshall in Toronto, and Paul Wells in Ontario.



Percentage of its power supply Ontario imports: nearly 15

## MEMORIES OF A LONG, COLD ELECTRICITY OUTAGE

THERE IS ONE THING worse than sweating, powerless, in the dark, as most Quebecers know, and it's freezing in the dark. Here, we tend to lose power in the middle of winter, when the nights last 14 hours, and the temperatures dip into the Rushmore zone. Drooping to sleep overnight on the side with such conditions—as many New Yorkers did last Thursday night—could be the last decision you'd ever make.

But as the great Montreal was, chances are the memories of the inconvenience will soon fade away. But if you lived through the horrors of January 1998, it is impossible to forget them. The strange, motusious beauty of frost-covered trees looks an empty street, the few long-range views of huge pylons isolated ones. Men and biting off roads they were trying to de-ice to save their houses from collapse, old folks died of cold or carbon-monoxide poisoning blankets, while towns, camped in school gyms for weeks, spent Three million people in the St. Lawrence and Ottawa valleys and without power, some for as long as 55 days. 30 died. It was blasted as the stars.

Downfall Montreal was cancelled off, the towers covered with ice that fell in large clumps and landed with a crash, breaking the silence in the streets. Police officers, with lights flashing, sat in a very interesting. At the time I was the executive producer of Global Quebec, which had gone on the air last week before, and everyone was working day and night to keep up with the story of a lifetime—despite the fact that our market had vanished. Usually we are in our living areas could we not TV. But life had stopped, making any sense.

So Montreal had power while Toronto's back ended last week—and, yes, some people there were hitting on the internet when Mayor Mel Lastman would call in the armed, fire, ice, cables and cold. Quebec was spared, but it was as if the entire world was back to back.

**200+**  
Number of major  
outages in  
Ontario added to that  
during emergency

**4-5 hours**  
Time a neighborhood  
without power can  
keep food cool



Quebecers learned from the ice storms and previous problems, and spent on upgrades

It has been there before. Following major blackouts in the 1960s and then the infamous ice storms of 1998, Hydro Quebec pumped \$3 billion into upgrading its power grid. We are self-reliant, and our system has the equivalent of big, big fuses that protect us from whatever aberration happens our neighbour's antiquated, overworked network.

Charest's minister of civil protection said that our system is better than their system did not send Quebec off as a bombastic, self-made isolationism—proof once more that the first Quebecers are in touch over emergency and the public was just belated to be involved, for once, our government had made the right decision and done the right thing with our money. As a result, Quebec was able to move its life emergency generators into Ontario's Hydro, and divert 1,800 megawatts of electricity to Ontario and New York State—helping the neighbours will remember their gesture next time we freeze alone in the dark. **SENAT JOURN IN MONTREAL**

According to its with Canada, length  
of time after which unrefrigerated,  
perishable foods should be thrown out

**2 hours**



## TAKING IN THE WELCOME MAT

Mistrust of U.S. forces is spreading like a virus, reports ADNAN R. KHAN

"**AMO MILES TO GO** before I sleep." Robert Frost may seem words removed from the closed streets of Baghdad, but for Iwan Thawny, no wonder on these lines. Thawny, a 25-year-old student majoring in English at Baghdad University, quotes Frost to make a point: Iraqis must choose their own road to peace. "America cannot do it for us," he says. "They are too afraid to take the road less traveled. We will alone—these poems repeating itself." Iraqis are being excluded from the rebuilding process, America has shut the door on us, but like they've shut the door to the rest of the world.

Even in Baghdad's blurring haze, Thawny has maintained vigilance in his protest against the occupation of his country, standing guard daily outside the gates of the heavily fortified coalition headquarters on the sprawling presidential palace grounds, holding up

hand-printed signs. On the other side of the fence, behind the tanks and soldiers, American signatures, led by Ambassador Paul Bremer and Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, plan the next phase of Iraq's destiny, safely sequestered away. It's become one of the dominant characteristics of the occupation: there has yet to see any of these personal players behind the redesign of his country. "It's as if we don't exist," he laments. "Or if we do exist, it's only as a threat."

Five months after the fall of Saddam Hussein regime, problems in Iraq are beginning to come into unsettling focus. The most ubiquitous symbol of the liberating forces' presence in Baghdad is the rapidly expanding angle of razor wire, newly strung in to help secure a city steadily coming from

chaos to organized resistance. Its job is to keep people out, and it's very good at what it does. No wonder that American forces have made such liberal use of the material, spending it over the streets of Baghdad. One source recalls the shabby goes wild.

Despite American administration claims that nothing has changed, more wire has replaced the safer touch employed when coalition forces first came to the city. Goss says the eggheads days that followed the triumphant arrival of U.S. troops. "At first, we were sort of a novelty," recalls 21-year-old Sgt. John Valdes of the 1st Armored Division, which arrived on the scene three months ago. "People were happy to see us. Now they know we're in for the long haul and there are some elements in the population, those who've never known it being in power, who are making trouble." It's steadily getting worse. Evidence of

Anti-American protesters clashing a U.S. military helicopter fired on below bags



an escalation in hostilities, and in some quarters—defensive posturing, heightened tensions—are everywhere. “When we first got here,” said one American soldier who refused to be identified, “it was great. We were walking the streets, playing with the kids. But now, we’ve been told to tighten up. Now we can’t let people come within 30 feet of us.”

Coalition soldiers face regular attacks from an increasingly hostile enemy. Checkpoints and security posts have evolved in to armed encampments, while the nearly 2,000 daily security patrols have become strictly organized. Instances of soldiers casually walking the streets and boistering with locals are nowhere to be seen these days; no one dares risk being caught off guard. And in this most critical moment for the occupying powers, digging in behind the most war has not meant an end to casualties. As of last week, at least 39 U.S. troops had died since George W. Bush declared the major combat to be over, with the latest death last week when a convoy hit a roadside bomb near Tikrit, killing one soldier and wounding another.

“The streets of Baghdad are not safe,” says Dr. Muhammad al-Falahi, an orthopedic surgeon at Baghdad’s al Yarmuk Hospital. “And from my vantage point, things are not improving.” Along the building corridors of his ward, al-Falahi assembly points out positions where he claims are innocent victims of the United States’ aggressive crackdown on anti-coalition elements. “I’ve seen more instances of roadside shootings of civilians by American forces this past month than I did in all of June and July combined,” says al-Falahi. But, he hastily adds, he doesn’t necessarily blame the increase only on the Americans. “There are, of course, always two sides in a war.”

The other side, the volatile stew of Saddam loyalists, disgruntled Iraqis and foreign terrorists who comprise the better resistance, has gone from one Iraqi nationalist justification for adopting an aggressive posture. With the American death toll mounting, and domestic support in the U.S. for the war effort on the wane, coalition commanders can ill afford a steady stream of body bags out of Iraq. That the latest escalation sheds a grim reality on the war has not only become more frequent, but also more sophisticated, and, perhaps most disturbing, now bear the trademarks of organized terrorism.



The recent Jerusalem embassy bombing, which killed 12 innocent Iraqi and injured scores of others, is only the latest, and most deadly, in a rash of attacks involving precise planning and advanced explosive devices. FBI investigators working with Iraqi authorities have indicated that one suspect is

**“TWO MONTHS AGO, we were able to go right up to soldiers and ask for help. But now they don’t even let us get close.”**

the bombing is a Jordanian nationalist known to have ties to al Qaeda. But for some of the survivors of the attack, the U.S. is also to blame.

In the trauma ward of al Yarmuk hospital, Mohammed Rashid Ismail, a 43-year-old father of four, tells of the explosion. “I don’t remember hearing the bomb go off,” he says, his mingled left ear propped up on pillows. “One moment I’m talking to the woman at the visa window, the next I’m on the ground surrounded by screaming peo-

ple.” As he talks, doctors restrain the several Achilles tendon of his right foot, stretching open the gash. Ismail seems not to notice. “It got very worse and worse for me here in Baghdad. First I had my car stolen, then thieves robbing my house, now this. I thought the Americans would bring peace to Iraq. In actual, they bring us terrorism.” Mohammed Jaffer, a 35-year-old taxi driver who occupies the bed next to Mohammed’s, is more severe in his condemnation of the U.S. “They did this to us,” he proclaims. “They want us to live in fear.”

Master of the occupying forces’ spending like war in Baghdad, Ismail is in part by the distance from al Qaeda’s tactics have created between occupation and occupation. “Two months ago, we were able to go right up to soldiers and ask for help. But now they don’t even let us get close,” one guard at the Khadim mosque in Baghdad’s Shi’a-dominated Khadim district complains. “Maybe there are some Baathists now working for the U.S., telling them to stop helping us.”

As the American administration, the sort of hostility and genuine concern as an already complex situation—even as the Jordanian embassy bombing has filled what

A line of armored vehicles moves into position in downtown Baghdad, spreading yet more razor wire on the outskirts of the city.

Seacher has characterized as a “low-intensity war” to another, more volatile level. “They have the weapons, they have the money, they have the will,” he said recently of the terrorist threat. “The reason they’re here is to kill American soldiers.” The better story is that the Bush administration’s pre-war claim of direct links between Iraq and al Qaeda terrorists, roundly debunked by terrorism experts (according to a leaked report, the CIA itself concluded there was no such connection), rings more true now, in a post-war Iraq, a Muslim country invaded by a Western power.

The coalition has shut the gates to the outside world, and is trying to hunt down those who push a threat. But the consequences of such actions undermine the intent. As coalition forces take cover inside heavily fortified encampments, as checkpoints spread, as troops adopt more rigorous screening techniques, Iraqis become angrier. Many are beginning to feel they’re now living under an other hostile regime, in the grip between occupiers and occupied victims. Mounting opposition has, inevitably, created a more conducive environment for

destabilizing forces to operate in.

On the streets of Baghdad, the tensions are taking their toll on both the civilian population and the men and women assigned the task of keeping the peace. For one 21-year-old soldier, identifying dangers and isolating them has become increasingly difficult given the prevailing mood of distrust. “Some people are still too scared to come forward with information,” he says, kneeling with his open car a line of armored vehicles. “But often, and there seem to be more and more of these, just don’t want to help us any more.”

And as the security situation erodes, the prospect of a sovereign Iraq steadily diminishes. With Iraqi self-government tied to stability on the ground, the Iraqi Governing Council, a group of 25 prominent Iraqi hand-picked by Bremer to head up an interim government, has made security its No. 1 priority. Many Iraqis, though, do not believe the council will have any lasting impact, viewing the group as a puppet government that lacks legitimacy—another victim of suspicion. An Aug. 5 decision by the Arab League not to recognize that new

entity did little to help the matter.

As for the council itself, it appears to be mired in bureaucratic shuffles. Its first act? Abolishing national holidays or honoring Saddam and creating a new one to mark his downfall. As for the key task of writing the new Iraqi constitution, the council set up a subcommittee to study the matter and no time frame on when its work will be completed has been given. Let alone a date for the drafting of a constitution itself. Without a constitution, Bremer has stated, there will not be any elections—and without elections, there can be no sovereignty.

For all his diligence on the front lines of the protest movement, Ishaq Thawry recognizes the Husseinian task confronting his people. “We’re running things around democracy,” he says. “We have no one who has stepped forward as a potential leader. We have no occupying force that prefers to rule us from a tower.” For him, the only road to peace and stability is through open dialogue with the people of Iraq. “You cannot hide behind us, give orders, and expect us to listen,” he says. “If there is to be any security, Fatah, Amman must open up.”



**THE WAR** in Iraq is waged in another desert half a world away, but at A. C. Houghton Elementary School in Irigoin, an arid little town in northeast Oregon, there are regular chemical weapons drills. The results can be scary. Teachers rush the 396 students into the gymnasium, a retreat stocked with emergency notions and pressurized to stop the entry of outside air. Sometimes they're not fast enough. Once, 12 students didn't make it into the gym before the door slammed shut. Another time, teacher Gail Hamming's entire class of 20 was locked out. "My second graders had to stand out in the hall and have kids scream when we tried to open the door," she says. "Oh, it was just terrible. They had nightmares."

The chemicals they fear are some of the same sorts of "weapons of mass destruction" that the U.S. and British governments say are part of the justification for invading Iraq in March. While occupying troops there have yet to find Saddam Hussein or his alleged cache, such weapons are stocked in abundance at the Urethilla Chemical Depot on the dusty outskirts of Irigoin. They're waiting to be destroyed in size, in a much-delayed US\$2.4-billion incineration program.

Thousands of ounces hold mustard blister agents, an oily liquid variant of the gas used with deadly effect in the First World War. There are even more potent nerve agents: GB (also known as sarin) and VX. The U.S. army describes both as "odorless and tasteless," though confirming that would likely be your last act on earth. Minute amounts of either cause nausea, unconsciousness, seizures, paralysis and, in army lingo, "cessation of respiration."

The nerve agents are packed variously into 136 spray tanks meant to be suspended from aircraft, 11,685 hand mines, 3,445 large bombs, 97,717 explosive projectiles and 105,868 potentially unstable M55 rockets. The chemicals can corrode the aging munitions. Some 109 "incidents" have been found since 1984. They are stored separately

The Urethilla depot's maze of machinery shows up incidents, spills and storage

# A FAREWELL TO ARMS

The U.S. army has controversial plans to burn chemical weapons in Oregon, writes **KEN MACQUEEN**

and monitored constantly. All are kept in the covered concrete structures known as igloos. They rise in orderly rows of humps from the sage and tumbledown of the desert floor, not an kilometer from A.C. Hargreaves school.

After a morning of summer school, Hargreaves and fellow teachers Judy Brown and Marilyn Post sit on tiny chairs in a junior classroom and ponder the prospect of an accident or terrorist attack on the depot. It goes without saying that anyone left outside that gas-crying students, frantic parents, mika death, while the teachers outside play God. "We're locked down," says Brown, who teaches Grade 3. "We have bullet-proof glass, and all of our doors are locked, and we let no one in." As mika in that prospect, there are worse ones. What if the children have left school? What if they're home alone?

**THE ARSENAL**, mostly relics of the Cold War, presents a frightening and wonderful conundrum. Pragmatism because the 2,500 tonnes of agents in this depot alone—and there are seven more across the U.S.—would fill railcars under the night/white day, the wrong/condition. And wonder, for, because many perished. The weapons, shipped in secrecy to the depot between 1943 and 1948, were never used. Congress or denied their destruction in the mid-1980s, in part of a nationwide program now expected cost US\$24 billion. The U.S. and Canada are among 153 signatories of the Chemical Weapons Convention that came into force in April 1997, mandating destruction of chemical stockpiles. Destroying America's chemical weapons bank—especially those stored in jagged igloos—has proved a complex environmental challenge. This month, the army began burning a weapons cache at a smaller incinerator in Avon, Ark., after six years of preparation and some local outrage. Another weapons incinerator operates in isolated Tinsley, Utah, and a smaller



U.S. cache was burned without major incident on a remote site in the Pacific Ocean. Canada dumped much of its stored agent into the ocean after the Second World War (page 15). Most of its remaining chemical stock was centralized or concentrated in the early 1990s in Canadian Forces Base Suffield, a chemical and biological weapons research facility in eastern Alberta.

As much as the three Irigan teachers want the weapons gone, they're horrified that chemicals and high explosives will be incinerated so close to home. The "demilitarization" complex at Uretilo looks large. It took army contractors four years to build, and bugs in the air a further two years of curing. In June, the base ordered a halt to a trial burn not involving chemical agents

after excessive levels of the metals nickel and antimony were detected in emissions.

The first chemical weapons could be burned by the end of the year or early next year—but not if burning can help it. It is among the plottings of a lawsuit challenging the army's incineration permit. The three teachers are members of Cagp, a group based in nearby Hermiston that advocates other means of weapons destruction, such as chemical neutralization. Post is fiercely proud of America's role in Iraq. She's less impressed with her army's determination to burn chemical weapons at home. "Why does it have to be like we're on a super highway, and we can't get off because we're already committed?"

Some 40,000 people live around the 6,000-hectare, in the city of Hermiston in the east



Amy McElroy, Janet Gabel, and Marilyn Brown, Post (left) question whether incinerating the arsenal is safe.

and in smaller centers during the heavily irrigated farmland. Most agree that weapons must go, but even that isn't a unanimous opinion. Americans feel a new vulnerability since the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and there are some who question the wisdom of destroying any part of their nation's military stockpile. This opinion was shared by Lt.-Col. Fred Pellissier, 46, who left in July after completing a turbulent two-year post as commander of the depot. Much of Pellissier's career has focused on chemical weapons

defense. "This is an incredibly inhospitable way of doing warfare," says Pellissier. "I am conflicted that we're getting rid of this dirty chemical weapons stockpile, and I'm just proud to be a part of it."

Pellissier doubts before the destruction starts, but his latest hope was hardly unrealistic. The first test in New York City and Washington occurred two months after he took command. Unusually warm from a "steep hillside," he says, in a potential new. Some 200 National Guard troops now bolster depot defenses. "It was quite a challenge just to ensure that we could maintain not only the security of the stockpile but the public trust as well."

The Uretilo depot has been a dominant force in the town since its construction in 1941 in the months before Pearl Harbor and America's entry into the Second World War. Then, as 1,000 igloos held conventional weapons, a mile it filled with the last of the non-chemical as until was moved in 1994. It has long been one of the region's major employers, but for years the arrival of chemical weapons in the 1960s was a military secret. "We never knew they were here," says Hermiston-born Karen Jones, a founder of Cagp. "When I went to school, there was never any emergency procedures. No drills. Nothing."

She doesn't say the army's assessment that the incinerator will destroy 99,999 per cent of the agent, leaving little but water vapor to escape up the smoke stack tower, who manages her health care of patients, school children or professional left because of her outpatient appointment. Others have questioned her purposes. "I try not to take it personally," she says. "But sometimes you do."

**ENTERING THE DEPOT'S** weapons destruction area is a daunting proposition. Vastness, like staff, every response to buy a few minutes to clear if there were a bit of a catastrophic blast. There are anti-aircraft guard houses and columns of flaming orange warning. "One of the deadly force, another road." Other signs say "No smoking in vehicles," a commitment to air quality that

seems quaint in the circumstances.

The facility is a post-apocalyptic mass of corrugated plumbing, concrete and rebar. There's a constant roar of frenetically scrubbed and monitored air. The main central room, lined with computers, monitors and screens of every sort, is staffed with enough grid-power to launch a rocket. This day, that spray much what they're up to. An M55 rocket is 1.9 m long. It is pushed with a nitrogen-gas-based propellant, and a high explosive warhead surrounded by almost five kilograms of liquid nerve agent in an air of computer-guided missiles, it's a death-delivery system as accurate and obnoxious as its chemical payload is versatile. Today, one dies.

A hatch opens. The rocket, in its flight, goes shipping tube, travels on a conveyor into a sealed, explosive containment room. Clamps halt its progress. Probes punch into the warhead, draining, vaporizing, most of its liquid cargo, flushing it into a 1,500°C furnace. The rocket tumbles forward, a short guidance off to safe, dropping it down into a destruction furnace. Crushed, crushed, the rocket is eaten as incineration. Not much will emerge but ash and aluminum scrap. A weapon no more. For those without personal stake in the local incineration debate, it's a powerful award-winning fireworks moment. It's one thing to read about an arms controversy, and quite another to see the process in work.

This, however, is a test run, loaded with glycol, not nerve. When the real burn starts this room will be sealed. The destruction is controlled robotically. Cleaning or repair will be done by teams of two, in full protective suits before entering. They'll arrange to be decontaminated and out from their suits. These, too, will be led to the flames. It will take up to six days, working day and night, to destroy this nerve cache. Clean up will take at least three more. Then the depot will close. The facility's mandate is to destroy itself. Parts of it will be retained or destroyed in its own retirement in a final act of immolation.

**SEVERAL HOURS AFTER** the M55's demise, chemist Don Bentley, a civilian member of the U.S. army and the Uretilo's project manager, stands in a hall above the massive facility and the otherworldly rows of igloos. His army career has achieved a kind of heroic balance 10 years estranging pro-



duction at an ammunition plant, and a decade preoccupied with chemical weapons destruction. He has tested the neutralization process to be used at some of the other weapons depots in the U.S., but he has faith in this moment as well.

Brady likes the plant making a show of risk from the local and global community. He hopes that once dry has three daughters, maybe some grandchildren, will be hooked to learn that the United States once worried itself "nasty stuff." And that they'll appreciate "their dad, their granddad, was not of getting rid of it." He has another dream, too, even though it seems an unlikely one for this desolate, sun-blazed place with an unpredictable fall. It's 2018, he says with a wistful expression, and all the glass is empty, the water is gone and the land is clean. "We're standing right here, he says, "and we see a child-like playground."

The wind is often fierce and today one arm is cast. Brady's words as they're ripped from his mouth. The wind is another thing people here don't agree on. Maybe they'll disagree on how long before it reaches the perimeter fence. Or maybe they'll disagree on how long it takes to reach the perimeter fence. Or maybe they'll disagree on how long it takes to reach the perimeter fence.

Casey Brady is preparing for the last scenario. It's the director of emergency

disaster-control concrete "ghost" house thousands of weapons, some leaking

management in Morrow County, one of two counties flanking the depot. He figures first responders have 16 minutes to get some control over a chemical disaster, before it overflows there. Beard, resident in cowboy boots and a white hat, spent 20 years in the army, including a tour as an intelligence officer during the first Gulf war, Desert Storm. He learned chemical gear in the field, heavy there, and he knows civilian

proton. Not bad for a county without even a single traffic light. Homes and businesses are equipped with "tone alert" radios that can snap on in a disaster to offer instructions and information. Emergency officials can run on television and radio programming, flash warnings on highway roadside boards, even broadcast from the community network of alerts. Homes near the depot have so-called shelter-in-place kits, and along with tape, towels and plastic to seal up a safe room. Morrow is the only county to equip homes near the depot with high-powered air cleaners.

All this is to convince folks to stay put. Any computer model where people try to cross a chemical cloud ends in traffic chaos. "If you try to evacuate and you don't make it," Beard says, "that's the worst of all possible worlds."

"I want to say that's the kind of unthinkable old families live in this desert, where the chemical weapons are a reality—not just the staff of headlines but a falling threat in a distant land." "I'm going to drive away," says Judy Brown, the teacher, without hesitation. Marilyn Perdue is in glimmering. "Unless we're in the school," adds Gail Thompson. "Then we'll be in the gym." If they can't get out, they'll be in the gym. If they can't get out, they'll be in the gym. If they can't get out, they'll be in the gym.

## A DIRTY LITTLE SECRET

Canada once made chemical weapons, but nobody seems to know where they all went

CANADA'S PAST as a chemical weapons producer was hidden so well that even the military isn't sure where all the remnants of its toxic struggle are buried, or what risk they represent to the public and the environment. In July, Defense Minister John McCallum announced the first stage of a \$16-million scavenger hunt for so-called weapon agents that were lost or improperly disposed of in Canada or its waters.

Step 1 is a search of military archives to create an inventory of domestic weapons agent disposal sites. Subsequent steps will assess recovery or remediation projects. "An increase and technology on the environment have increased over the years, we've realized in some cases that we have left a legacy behind," says Chris Hough, project director of the weather agent disposal program at the Department of National Defence.

The legacy dates to the start of research in 1937. By 1941, wartime Canada was producing the gas on several farms at the Chemical Warfare Laboratories in Ormstown, and, in a joint program with Britain, at a 260,000-sq-ft experimental station at Suffield, Alta., northwest of Medicine Hat. A biological facility on Grosse Ile in the St. Lawrence River produced deadly anthrax for Britain and the U.S. Much of this stayed a dark secret until 1989, when former prime minister John Brady, now a Hamilton-area Liberal MP, revealed the scope of the program in *Deadly After: Canada's Secret War*.

Brady's book opens with a graphic description of the anthrax leading 16,000 drums—about 2,500 tonnes—of a deadly natural blatter agent onto a war surplus ship in Halifax in 1946. The ship was towed away to the Atlantic and punctured by anti-aircraft guns until it sank at 2,360 m in about 300 km from Sable Island, N.S. Brady's



The toxic warfare gas shown in this 1947 photo was later dumped in the Pacific.

book also reveals open-air field tests that sent clouds of poison raining across the Suffield range, and experiments that capped about 3,000 Canadian soldiers to mustard gas. Today, Brady says he's pleased the defence department is investigating its past actions.

How Canada lost track of much deadly parts of its arsenal is "a logical question to ask," Hough concedes. "The activities happened 50, 60 years ago," he says, "and it's only recently been determined that maybe these activities weren't as safe as they were thought to be at the time." There are suspected past war chemical weapons dumps off both coasts. A 1947 picture from the Marine Depot shows 400 tonnes of chemical warfare gas, "much of it well on the secret list," being unloaded in nearby Esquimaux for dumping in the Pacific. Brady's book long wondered if the chemicals sent to the Atlantic seabed contributed to the collapse of cod stocks. The answer will try to locate the sites and determine their potential risk before deciding if the expense of deep-sea exploration is justified.

The standards for land-based deposits have also changed. In the mid 1970s, 700 tonnes of bulk mustard were authorized at Suffield using land and water. Colder methods were also used, including "explosive de-

molition, weathering and open-air burning carried out at remote locations," says a 1995 study on weapons disposal from Defence Research Establishment Suffield. Such activities raised local concerns that "research and development programs might be responsible for certain illnesses or diseases in the district communities," the study says without further elaboration.

Suffield conducted another round of aerial agent dumps in between 1989 and 1991. By then, the remaining cache was considered "an unacceptable risk" that also compromised "Canadian interests at the United Nations Conference on Disarmament," the Suffield study says. The \$15-million program involved chemically neutralizing 4.3 tonnes of nerve agents as well as burning in a transparent incinerator 34.5 tonnes of mustard and lewisite blatter agents. Some of the secrecy surfaced with Canada's weapons stash. "Our program, post-World War Two, really scaled back," says Hough. "There was no need to produce large quantities of material and we've had a defensive focus for years."

Recent terror attacks may have inspired Canada's new openness about its chemical weapons expertise. "That defensive knowledge is crucial," says Brady. "The last thing you want," he adds, "is some terrorist out there thinking that Canada is totally ignorant in these fields, because that makes it possible."



## CRUISING TO THE MAX

The World is a sumptuous home away from home for the idle rich



**AT A TIME** when the rich seek anonymity and success among their own kind, a privileged few have found their Utopia afloat, on a very special globe-circling ocean liner, appropriately named *The World*. With floating condominiums ranging in price from just over \$3 million to more than \$4 million, and every corner that can be occupied or imagined, the 12-deck ship is spending this month at such exotic B.C. ports of call as Prince Rupert, Campbell River, Nanaimo and Vancouver, where it recently spent a day inspecting its facilities and chatting up the residents. They seemed content enough, but weren't particularly chatty, since what they're paying for is the highest form of privacy. They're on their home turf, and inquiring journalists aren't encouraged.

These personal villas to glamorous spots on seven continents belong to a category of their own. Unlike most cruise line passengers, they don't rush around frantically taking the ship's rising tides, or need to line up for beach bar towels at Barcelona's forced architecture, the historic ramparts of Cartagena or the swimming beaches of Fiji, all ports of call for *The World*. They concentrate on being laid back. They can afford to. Life aboard the \$370-million Norwegian-built vessel is lived according to their own timetable, whims and desires. No regimented dining shifts, no shuffled-board tournaments, no obligatory cocktails with the cap-

The \$370-million ship took its owners to Australia, New Zealand, last February

tain. *The World* has truly made the world their center, if cruising without landlubbers. The ultimate global community.

The imaginative scheme works because, with time on their hands, few passengers are *pushy* or *impulsive* enough to try to impose their agendas on others. When you have as much time as money, life becomes a series of throwaway gestures, so that the ship's splendor and privileges are made to seem inevitable rather than phony, routine instead of ostentatious. There are no admission rules (except the required ones), and yet there is a decided homogeneity about these floating nomads. If they didn't know each other before they signed up, they know each other now and feel at home. "We enjoy being with our kind of people," one

normal traveller told me. "That provides us with a comfort zone. We seek out another's company, yet respect each other's privacy."

They are truly crisscross of the new century. They are not merely rich, but *life rich*. At that level, wealth isn't money-like power, but a way of life. And what this unique vessel allows them to enjoy is their hard-earned idleness, as they relax and gaze outly over the ever-changing scenery. They have made conspicuous consumption conspicuous leisure, and found it to be life's most rewarding joyride.

They have signed up for *The World*, not because it's a totem of understated luxury, but because they have bought into the dream of expanding their geographical horizons and never getting off the merry-go-round. The unique vessel is the 21st-century version of the private railway cars that graced the journeys of the 19th-century robber barons, the megayachts that eventually replaced them, and the capricious mansions that adorned their predecessors' lives. Now, it's a private, 40,000-tonne floating Camelot that they own through 30-year leases.

Destinations are laid out as special events such as Auckland's America's Cup race earlier this year, the Cannes Film Festival, the Monaco Grand Prix and a cricket ball in India. During its inaugural year in 2002, *The World* visited 140 ports in 40 countries. This year, the SAS-owned vessel called the ship's voyage Asia itinerary—thus the Canadian suburban ports of call. Only 166 in all, the ship can visit ports accessible to the much heavier and larger galleons of the cruise trade, such as Devil's Island, off French Guiana, Pusan, South Korea, and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

The World's 119 two- and three-bedroom condos consist from 190 to 300 sq. ft., with many custom touches, but four basic design themes connect continental touch by New York's Jean Proulx Mediterranean, the formal colonial corner of London's Nina Campbell, the stark classic contemporary approach by Milan's Luciano De Pilis and the sturdy,



The pool on Deck 11 and designer suites like this one by Milan's Luciano De Pilis add splendor to life's most rewarding joyride



functional sea-going simplicity of Norway's Peter Voss and Ryan Starbrennan, who also designed the ship's public spaces. All apart suites (including 58 guest suites) are equipped with satellite-connected communication systems so that their occupants can remain in instant contact with their shore lives. From Internet Webpages and e-mail to fax and e-mail, there are also 14 marble bathtubs meant for two-hour post-coital, chilled champagne baskets. Three quarters of the staterooms have been sold.

The World is staffed by a crew of 275, which also happens to be the average number of passengers usually at residence, though fully loaded the ship will hold nearly 1,000. The normal one-to-one passenger/crew ratio is the highest afloat, but

service is never intrusive.

As well as a quarter of gourmet restaurants, Proulx's delicatessen provides a change of epicurean paces, such as Miss Valeri's Patisserie. Many of the apartment dwellers prefer to eat in their suites, renting staff chefs and waiters for the occasion.

Apart from their obsession with remaining private, gals take up much of their time as it dawns. *The World* has the only genuine grass putting greens at sea (as well as the only full-size tennis court), and driving range for passengers slice balls at remote-controlled target greens floating off the ship. They use "tee balls" made of biodegradable material that fish can eat. On land, *The World's* guests enjoy reciprocal visiting privileges at 116 prestige courses. For more scientifically inclined, there is a 630-sq.-m spa that specializes in anti-aging therapy. Among its offerings: \$420 per of cream-based face cream.

The ship is registered in Bahamas, but it can't be claimed as a primary residence—all passengers must declare a permanent land address. (Twenty per cent of the passenger base hail from the United States; no Canadian residents are on the current roster.) *The World* is the first of five ships planned by its Norwegian inventor, but it could be the precursor of much larger, similar ventures. Carverly in the design stage is projected to rival *The World* with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in Washington as the Freedom Ship, a \$25-billion, floating barge with 25 stories above the main deck that would have a small airport, perhaps a hospital, schools and several hotels.

The only agency that serves *The World's* passengers is auge. They're interested in a dwindling area, the half-on-anywhere-hold on their apartments, and they intend to make the most of their opportunity. They are drawn out as adventures and pilgrims, off in pursuit of individual growth and collective discovery. In the process, *The World* leaves a wide wake. But its coveted passengers seldom leave a trail.

# 'CANADA REMAINS ALIENATED'

The Alliance leader takes on the Liberals over Iraq, mad cow and gay marriage

**BETWEEN ELECTIONS**, trying to attract attention as an opposition leader has traditionally been one of the toughest tasks in Canadian politics. The spotlight focuses mostly on the government—and given the struggle between the forces of Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin, the Liberals have dominated the political news even more than usual this year. Since Stephen Harper won the Canadian Alliance leadership on March 30, 2000—ending Stockwell Day's controversial run in the job—he has had his work cut out for him. Harper, 44, has been striving to put the Alliance back on a stable course, while creating an image for himself as a credible would-be prime minister. For many Canadians, he remains largely an unknown quantity. But in his party, Harper's roots run deep. He was a key thinker in the early days of the Alliance's predecessor, the Reform party, and he was the key architect of its election platform the first time it ran in a federal election, the 1988 vote. He first served in Parliament from 1993 to 1997, and then returned as an MP following a by-election victory in Calgary Southwest shortly after he took over as Alliance leader. Harper spoke with *Ontario Editor John Godden* in his Parliament Hill office.

**It's been more than a year since you won the Alliance leadership. How would you sum up what you've accomplished so far?**  
Fundraising is up hugely. We've paid off our debt to the banks. Cranes is united, candidates are getting nominated, our election preparations are well advanced. We've been leading opposition debate in Parliament. Media coverage has gradually improved in both volume and tone. I think we're meeting all the targets we have to at this point.

**You've said you expect an election next spring, and everybody agrees Paul Martin will be leading the Liberals. What do you make of predictions that under his the Liberals will take a lot of seats from your party in the West?**

I don't think there's any substantive disagreement about the Liberals making gains in the West. I think they are more likely to have losses in the West. They've done nothing to endorse themselves to Western Canadians in the past couple of years and I don't see any evidence that Paul Martin will change that. If he has a successful campaign, there are always seats in the West that are fought over by the Alliance and the Liberals on the margins. But if he is going to make significant gains, they are far, far more likely to be in Quebec or even Atlantic Canada.

**Mad cow disease is one issue of particular concern in your home region. How would you have handled the issue, particularly Japan's ban on Canadian beef, differently from the Liberals?**

The problem now is not a health problem or an agri-business problem. It's really a political problem. This issue could be resolved, and would have been resolved, if we had better relations with the United States. Anybody who thinks that the attitude this government took on the Iraq war, and takes generally on Canadian relations with the U.S., is not having a real impact on this country is seriously deluding themselves.

We had a hostile trade action from Japan. The way we would deal with that, if we had good relations with the U.S., is that Canadians and Americans would stick together, because we have an integrated North American market, and deal with Japan. The problem, of course, is that there is no Canadian official who goes to Washington and says "Canadians and Americans should stick together," after the compensation on the war.

**You supported the U.S. on the war. But now there's the ongoing controversy over whether George W. Bush and Tony Blair employed evidence of weapons of mass destruction to justify the war. And there's the problem of continued attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq. Aren't these factors making it look like a good thing Canada cut the one out?**

On the justification for the war, it wasn't related to finding any particular weapon of mass destruction. In our judgment, it was much more fundamental. It was the removing of a regime that was hostile, that clearly had the intention of constructing weapons systems. It was just an intolerable situation. If anyone wants to go back to the good old days of Saddam Hussein, let them say so.

I think, frankly, that everybody knew the post-war situation was probably going to be more difficult than the war itself. Canada remains alienated from its allies, shut out of the reconstruction process to some degree, unable to influence events. There is no upside to this postwar Canada took.

**On the home front, courts in Ontario and B.C. have ruled that banning same-sex marriages is unconstitutional and the federal government didn't pursue an appeal. How plans to reverse the law in line with those decisions and get the Supreme Court to approve the change in advance. Doesn't that make the plan even more in line with the Alliance's position on the issue?**

We are going to proactively put this issue forward. Parliament voted in 1999 to support the constitutional definition of marriage. If we can get the same motion passed again, then we're on entirely different ground. We will be asking for Parliament to legislate on the matter. We're not going to let this go on for two years and then let the government pretend it was a decision of the courts. The government appointed the judges, the government allowed the judges to rule in this certain way, the government refused to appeal. The government has decided to reproduce same-sex marriage through non-Parliamentary means. It's a decision the Liberal party made.

Now we will see if in Parliament, in public, the Liberal party is willing to stand by that decision. But if it turns out that Parliament, particularly the government caucus, doesn't agree with that decision, then we're again in a serious situation. It's going to come



down to, ultimately, who will legislate in this matter? Will it be Parliament or will it be the courts?

**You're sometimes seen as being a little too analytical and not much of a performer. How are you adjusting to life as leader?**

Some people enter politics because there are cameras and microphones. They really want to be cameramen, but they can't sing and they can't dance. Politics affords them a stage and an audience. I have no desire to be in the entertainment business. If I wasn't a politician, the last thing I would have been

was a singer or a musician. That part of the job is not what I care. I guess I'm getting more comfortable with it. But I tend to be a politician because I think there are things wrong with the way the country is being run. I want to see it better run, more honestly. Am I enjoying it? I'm never bored.

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Column | DONALD COLE



## THE EMPTY CAMPAIGN

None of the candidates for U.S. president will dare ask basic economic questions

**RESIDING** IN the U.S. means living in a country whose major domestic industry is a political campaign. The nation faces our greatest and most elections biennially, and presidential elections quadrennially. This year, California will even face a recall of its unpopular governor, Gray Davis, which would trigger an open ballot, winner take-all election in which the sag voter-gener could become governor, no matter how small the percentage of votes cast.

With national and state elections still 15 months off, the media should be ignoring politics in favour of the economy, health, weather, movies and traffic accidents. However, the 2004 election campaign is underway because the presidential political party primaries are to begin in January. Politicians are out raising funds and shaking hands. President George W. Bush has already raised more money than all nine Democratic campaigns to contest him.

With so many candidates, we are awash in rhetoric, demagoguery, distortions and hyperbole. What can, alas, be safely predicted is that we will hear virtually no constructive discussion of the real problems facing the American economy (here's my discussion with last, which I profiled along with hope for national coming for Ted Williams, Barbara Bush, Northing Joye, Lewis Armstrong, and J.R. Talbot).

1. The U.S. trade deficit is around five per cent of GDP. Manufacturing jobs have been disappearing for a decade. In every case through history where this kind of imbalance occurred, economic collapse and/or massive currency devaluation ensued. U.S. companies who pay health-care costs for their own employees and retiree cannot compete against companies that don't have those costs. Health-care costs are rising at least five times as fast as overall inflation, so the situation is worsening by the month. What should be done?

2. Although the U.S. does not provide universal health care, it does provide for the elderly and many of the poor through Medicare

and Medicaid, respectively. Together these programs cost the same percentage of GDP as many other western governments spend on universal health care programs. One recent study estimated that the present value of the unfunded liabilities of Medicare and Medicaid is many times higher than the national debt. Congress is currently debating adding a huge new benefit to Medicare—prescription drugs. How will the economy cover the cost of these programs when boomers start retiring?

3. The pre-bush's overvaluation makes it possible for many foreign economies—including Canada—to base their prosperity on sales to U.S. consumers. All overvalued currencies eventually crash. Currently, according to her J.P. Morgan Chase, Asian economies prevent the dollar from falling

**THIS IS the first recovery in which foreigners take U.S. white-collar jobs without immigrating to the U.S. What should be done?**

against their currencies by buying Treasury and other high-quality U.S. bonds. J.P. Morgan estimates that by year end, the Asians will hold 70 per cent of total global currency reserves. These Asian purchases now fund a great share of Washington's estimated fiscal deficit of US\$455 billion, but hurt the U.S. economy by maintaining its uncompetitiveness. How can the U.S. cut costs to maintain a balance between these two gigantic money flows, and what will happen when these foreign governments stop purchasing their currency notes?

4. The Bush administration pinches free trade, but for political reasons imposed duties on roughly 20 per cent of its used car imports, and the President signed a farm bill that increases the damage inflicted on developing world agricultural producers

through subsidies to American farmers. How long will policies crimp prosperity? 5. The administration claims that by lowering the maximum income tax rate to 15 per cent it is stimulating the economy. Yet a high percentage of those who earn more than \$2 million a year are entertainment executives and stars along with real lawyers. How will lowering their taxes help the economy at large? And why does Bush go to bat so enthusiastically for groups who supply financial muscle to Democrats? (According to a study in the 2000 election, 82 per cent of all individual political donations of \$1 million and more were made to Democrats.)

6. The Internet was a large-scale American job-producer during the 1990s. It has become a large-scale American job-destroyer. Those under-30 million of American engineering, service and office jobs are being outsourced permanently to Asia now that transnational communication is essentially free. In previous economic recoveries, Asian companies improved their productivity by hiring lower-paid U.S. sales people returned. This time, they're sending entire departments overseas. English-speaking Asians are being over U.S. officials because they're happy to accept 20 per cent of U.S. wages here. This is the first recovery in which foreigners take U.S. white-collar jobs without immigrating to the U.S. What can or should be done?

7. The technology-telemarketing stock market crash has wiped out the savings of millions and produced a recession whose effects still linger. Despite its cuts and Depression-level low interest rates. The main cause of this economic and financial disaster was the opportunity for instant enrichment at an unprecedented scale through stock options for those lucky enough to be CEOs and top traders at the time of the previous over-speculative bull market. Stock options offered this unique opportunity because they allowed top management to enrich themselves without sharing the costs to stockholders in earnings reports. Will the next administration demand more accounting from the business community?

The 2004 election campaign has begun. It doesn't promise to be an uplifting exercise in democracy—however good it may be for Democrats.

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# I AM MORE TALK AND LESS WALK.

I HAVE MORE WAYS OF GETTING PEOPLE TALKING. BUT I AM NOT ALL TALK. I AM VOICE AND DATA, BOTH ON THE SAME TEAM. I HAVE THE POWER TO PUNCH TIME CLOCKS, LISTEN TO EMAIL AND SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS. I HAVE THE POWER TO SAVE VALUABLE MILEAGE ON OFFICE MOVES AND I.T. STAFF SHOES. I AM A SECURE, PINT-SIZED PRODUCTIVITY EXPERT THAT DELIVERS SUPER-SIZED ROI. I AM MORE THAN A CISCO 7960G IP PHONE.



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Will Ferguson's Canada | >

his drunken owner from a Israel and, in doing so, knocked down a white overseer suffering in anger, the overseer and three other men ambushed Benson and beat him with a cane post. Benson's arm was broken and both shoulder blades were shattered. "I could feel and hear the pieces of my skull be blasted apart against each other with every breath," Benson recalled in his memoirs. "No physician or surgeon was ever called to dress my wounds."

The attack left Benson in chronic pain and unable to lift his arms to his head for the rest of his life. By then, he had already discovered his true calling: the gospel. Benson went on to become an ordained minister, a slave who preached sermons about the children of Israel and their flight from captivity. Benson was a powerful orator and through his work he was able to save up enough money to buy his freedom—a rare feat. But when his bid for freedom seemed at hand, he was betrayed by his master, who eventually pocketed the money and then attempted to sell Benson. In 1839, after 41 years as a slave, Josiah Benson decided to escape to Canada.

In Upper Canada, the slave trade had been abolished in 1793 and thousands of American slaves—estimates range as high as 30,000—followed "the North Star to freedom." A secretive network of safe houses, dubbed the Underground Railroad, helped spirit runaways to Canada. The safe houses were known as "stations," the fugitive slaves were "passengers" and the people who guided them were "conductors."

The hymn that the slaves sang was based on biblical meanings. "Israel" referred to the slaves, yearning for freedom. "Egypt" referred to the American slave states and "pharaoh" to the slave owners. "Canada" was Canada, and the underground network itself was "sweet chariot." "To bring me home" was to come down south. And "carry me home" meant to be taken to freedom.

One moonlit night in September, Josiah Benson, his wife and their four young children posed this clandestine migration; they caught the daybreak and slipped away. A long, grueling hike took them to Ohio, where a sympathetic Scottish river boat captain smuggled Benson and his family down river to Buffalo, N.Y., and then paid for their passage on a ferry boat to Canada. When they reached Canadian soil, Josiah threw himself on the ground and rolled in the



dirt, laughing so loudly that a passerby thought he was having a seizure. Once the initial elation passed, reality set in: "I was a stranger in a strange land," Benson recalled. "I knew nothing about the country or the people."

Ferrier slaves had introduced widespread tobacco cultivation to southern Ontario. Indeed, they had a virtual monopoly on tobacco, mainly because they had acquired in the American South. Benson, growing from his pulpit, recognized the weakness in relying on a single cash crop and he urged the farmers to diversify. He called upon the black community to invest their earnings

**WE NEEDED TO HIT THE HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS, TO SEE CANADA FIRST-HAND, TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IT REALLY MEANS TO BE A CANADIAN**

in land of their own. "Where," in Benson's words, "every tree which we felled, and every bush of which we raised, would be for ourselves, in other words, where we could secure all the profits of our own labour."

And in 1841, the Dawn settlement was founded by arranging the purchase of 200 acres of rich farm land along the Sydenham River (now what is now Dresden) and securing a further 100 acres soon after. Benson helped establish a fully integrated community of freed blacks, with a school, a church, a sawmill, a blacksmith shop and a gristmill.

Benson's autobiography, *The Life of Josiah Benson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada*, was published a few years later and provided the basis for Harriet Beecher Stowe's abolitionist tale, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Stowe's novel sparked an international outcry by its depiction of the cruelty of the slave trade and Abraham Lincoln would credit it with helping spark the U.S. Civil War (Yes, sometimes books do matter).

Years passed. The Civil War ended, and slavery was abolished. Josiah Benson travelled back to Maryland to visit the plantation where he had been a slave. It was a poignant moment. When Benson arrived, he found the fields overgrown and the buildings crumbling into ruin. His former master had long since died, and the widow was now residing in the fading estate on her own. When Benson came to the front door, she looked at him in wonderment.

"So," she said, using his old nickname.

"Ma'am," he replied. "I always was."

Josiah Benson may have been the inspiration for Uncle Tom, but that name has since taken on negative meanings of conservatism, which is unfortunate, because it underestimates the heroic scale of Benson's life and his achievements. His house, now known as "Uncle Tom's Cabin," is not a cabin at all, but a two-story home. It evokes much history.

The Benson house, along with a sawmill, a church and another home from that era, are located on land that was once part of the original Dawn settlement. The church, with weathered siding boards and square hand-hewn rafters, contains the very pulpit that Benson preached from, where he would have expounded tales of slavery and freedom, of a promised land and a journey through the wild west. The massive planks of the church's board-and-batten construction are knotted and dry, the colour of driftwood. When you push against the wood, it is soft and malleable, as pliant as a yielding an memory itself.

The Dawn settlement—and others like it—had an immense and far-reaching impact on the black community in Canada. But its time passed as well, and the community eventually disbanded. The assets were sold and the land donated to a school in Chatham, and though hard years of segregation would follow in Dresden and elsewhere, the black community has now become integrated into the mainstream. I talked about this with Brenda Lambson, a well-spoken woman who believes her family first came to Canada via the Underground Railroad.

She estimates the black community in



A SPECTACULAR high wire, a breathtaking work of engineering: assembling the thin framework of a massive cathedral, rose last week at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, stretching 250 m from the Prince's Gates toward the gaze-windmill on the waterfront. The man who created this installation then walked on it, on a cable the width of an index finger, 20 stories above the ground, with no net below. He has been many places on similar wires, waving millions and raising money for children in China, where he crossed the Yangtze River, above fierce U.S. amusement parks, and between skyscrapers in casinos from Las Vegas to Shanghai. Returning to Canada, to the very spot where his career began, he is setting his seventh world record for the 125th anniversary of the CNE. Over 16 days, Jay Cochrane plans to walk more than 30 km on his wire.

Forty-five years ago, at the summer of 1918, Danny Kage was performing at the CNE Grandstand while the midway rides whirled. One day, unaccompanied by 200,000 people jammed through the turnstiles. For many, the mining town of Sudbury, Ont., 14-year-old Jimmy Cochrane was dreaming big dreams. He wanted his life to be filled with romance and daring. A few years earlier, when his mother took him to see a circus, he saw a man acrobatic on a high wire. It gave him an electric feeling in his stomach. "That's what I'm going to do when I grow up," he told his mother. "Oh no, you're not," she responded. "Oh yes, I am," he said. Not long after, she and her husband were driving out to town and noticed a child standing on the railing atop the water tower. "My God," she gasped, "where are his parents?" Jimmy's father looked up. "That," he intoned, "is your son!"

Today, the Prince's Gates look very much the way they did in 1918 when Cochrane appeared beneath them, having hitchhiked south from Sudbury without his parents' permission. He headed straight for the grandstand. The renowned Royal Harlequin Circus was there in all its splendor, and the beautiful Princess Diana was doing a stour turn on the single trapeze. In real life she was Mrs. Stuppel Harlequin, and the boy needed his badge and knooked on her outer door. When he explained that he was going to embark on a serious career, she kindly explained that that wasn't a good idea. "Well," he replied, "it's a no



## A WALKER ON THE WILD SIDE

Sudbury, Ont., native Jay Cochrane has wowed crowds around the world with awesome funambulist exploits

bad, then how come you're still in it?"

He started cleaning up behind the horses for 30 cents a day. When the circus departed, Harlequin put the boy on a bus to Sudbury. But Cochrane turned up again at the show's next stop, and kept appearing until the circus kept him. He passed his audition to teach him an act. First, he was a trapeze artist. Then he took to the high wire as Jay Cochrane, Prince of the Air.

High-wire walking is not, in many imaginations, a decadent career. From a 2,000-year-old profession, much older than the circus—there that depicted in Roman mosaics. Funambulists have crossed gorges and even the

Niagara River near the falls—unparalleled stunts like the Great Falls, Blouffort, and Willard and Madame Sogai. Walking the wire requires balance, guts, precision and an extraordinary ability to concentrate.

Cochrane has become one of the immortals. But before he ascended to fame, he suffered a setback that would have derailed most others. In 1965, as he walked on a 36-m-high apparatus at Variety Stadium in Toronto, a look-alike. Someone had tripped and a bolt. Both his legs were badly broken and an ankle was crushed. At first, doctors told him it was unlikely he'd walk again, and if he did walk, he'd never perform.

Four years later, however, Cochrane was back. He had studied structural engineering during his convalescence, and began to erect his own wires. Today, they're marvels of construction, spanning daunting distances and rising from perilous places. In 1970, the Hullon Bay Company opened a flagship skyscraper complex at the corner of Yonge and Bloor Streets in Toronto, and Cochrane was asked to walk 40 stories high between two towers on his first "sky wire"—a very high wire erected outdoors. "When I got to the edge, I felt I couldn't do it," he remembers. Then he closed his eyes and ran out. "My life is like that," he says. "It's one step

at a time and don't look back."

In 1972, he returned to the CNE and set a world record by continuously crossing back and forth on a 300-m-long wire, completing four kilometers. But nothing—not even crossing Disney's Epcot Centre in Florida or the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Mo., or being on a wire in Puerto Rico for 21 days, or any of the hundreds of other walks he's performed—prepared him for the challenge he met in 1995: crossing the Yangtze River near the futuristic site of the Three Gorges Dam. The wire would have to be at least 100 m above the river, a 100-m-long and almost half a kilometer high, the greatest

Cochrane, crossing the Yangtze, is back at the CNE, where he first joined the circus.

obstacle height and length in history, the walking nearly wove football fields at the altitude of a low-flying plane. Cochrane crossed in a helicopter on Oct. 28, and started out on the swilling tides of Karel's Boats. He crossed in 53 minutes.

That endeavor, viewed by 200,000 eye-witnesses and many millions on Chinese television, elevated him to iconic status in that country. A stamp was struck with his image, a school was named for him, and today he cannot walk down Chinese streets without drawing crowds. In 2001, he crossed Taiwan's Love River on an even longer wire.

Here at home, despite six world records, Cochrane is seldom recognized. But as he views them again at the CNE, he doesn't seem too concerned. Tanned like the woolly Flatlander he now is, the single Cochrane looks younger than his 49 years, talks fast and moves fast. His greatest concern is his craft and the charity work he does for sick and disadvantaged children. He has raised money for them worldwide, and hopes his first attempt there to surpass over two thousand (CNE proceeds go to the Trillium Wish Foundation, for seriously ill children).

Cochrane has one remaining high-wire goal: to walk directly over both falls at Niagara—at the same time. The difficulties involved in raising such a wire and crossing it, he admits, are nearly insurmountable. What's more of an obstacle is the Niagara Parks Commission and its U.S. equivalent. To them, funambulism remains a nuisance—they've banned it for more than a century. James, Blouffort and several others walked the gorge in the 19th century. But no one has since. And no one has ever crossed directly over the falls.

For now, Cochrane is concentrating on his CNE wire, perhaps the last major act in his career before the prospective finale at Niagara. Huge photos of his first live the boulevard near the Prince's Gates. He is walking every day of the Ex (Aug. 17 Sept. 1), and began this week with an act, spot Bright show. A few days earlier, announcing he would be the wire for the media, he spoke to Madeline. In an interview, he blurted his life to a child's dream. Then he crossed high above us, the CN Tower rising in the distance. Close by, that big windmill turned silently. Dan Quinlan never got it right, but the Sudbury Ball just may have.

# Nothing like a little ice to cool you down »



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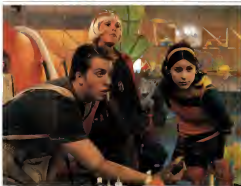
## CLOSINGNOTES



**PEOPLE | 50**  
The man with all the answers  
After 18 seasons, 4,000 episodes and a crown shave, Alex Trebek is still at the top of his game.



**FILM | 51**  
This time she's funny, not fragile  
In the new film *Julie & Julia*, Julia Roberts plays a superficial beauty-obsessed in an effort with a gourmet chef. It's the French chef's first moment as comedy, and she found the recipe to be more of a stretch than the serious fare she's tackled in the past.



### LISTINGS

**Festival of Fathers**  
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[www.festivaloffathers.com](http://www.festivaloffathers.com)  
/festivaloffathers  
/watchlist.php?eventid=172  
Charlottetown

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[www.worldrobotsgames.com](http://www.worldrobotsgames.com)  
Toronto

**Marion Teufel**  
Aug. 31 Oct. 13  
A Winnipeg Act, actress Teufel has been this kind to tell others who have become known for her work in Winnipeg. Teufel has been a producer in which she's explored themes of a national music life.  
[www.marionteufel.com](http://www.marionteufel.com)  
Winnipeg

**Winnipeg: Wooden Boat Festival**  
Aug. 21-24  
See the history, marine woodworking and family boat building among the things to do in Quiville Island during this annual wooden boat competition.  
[www.woodenboatfestival.com](http://www.woodenboatfestival.com)  
Winnipeg

### TV | Breaking out of the corner of the screen

Dead characters on television pop up infrequently and are usually peripheral—a girl seen on *Parky Brewster*, the son of a doctor on *E.R.*, or a lobbyist on *The West Wing*. However, stories about the dead are creeping into the spotlight. Last season, CTV launched *See Thomas F. Kelly*, a series based on the real-life experience of a deaf Ohio woman who worked surveillance for the FBI. And premiering this September is a new Canadian children's television show and *Webisodes*, a series in which a hearing boy named Max is transported into space and lands on Deaf Planet. He befriends Sandra, a deaf teen, who helps him learn to speak. "It's amazing to watch deaf kids view the show," says Toronto-based co-creator Matt Hornberg, 38. "They

*deafplanet.com*  
(above) was created by William O'Brien (left) and Hornberg

**THE DETAILS**  
development cost, granted to Kelly a grant of \$1.1 million on TV and Alberta's Access



use deaf characters making decisions and integrated into the plot line rather than being relegated to the top left hand corner of the postscriptary channel." Three years ago, the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf approached marionette, a production company founded by Hornberg and his friend Mark Bishop, 36, to create a video-based encyclopedia in American Sign Language. That evolved into *deafplanet.com*. "Ironically," says Hornberg, "we've had to do so much sound design and original music just to make it accessible for hearing kids." For these two friends, neither of whom is deaf, it's been a frustrating experience. "We're working in a language that's not our own," says Hornberg. But as they start developing the second season—before their first has even aired—it's a language they've come to love.

AMY CAMERON



John Intini starts a sentence... Alex Trebek finishes it

Alex Trebek—Stallone, Ore.'s most famous son—admits he hasn't been home in a long while. He's a busy guy. In fact, the 63-year-old, who started his TV career as a CBC reporter in the early '80s, has hosted more than 4,000 episodes of the popular game show *Jeopardy!*—and begins his 30th season next month. Sell the final *Jeopardy!* episode was able to find time to talk to *Mad About Researcher* Reporter John Intini.

A GOOD-QUANTITY... knows how to step into the background and let the game and the contestants be the star. MY FAVORITE PHILOSOPHER IS... Mark Twain. He wasn't really a philosopher but his insights into humanity were right on. But I haven't studied philosophy for 40 years. I guess now I would read Catholic I should say Thomas Aquinas.

WANNING AN ODDITY THIS YEAR... was very surprising when I had to win in 14 years. I was beginning to feel like Susan Lucci.

PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO KNOW I OWN A... 1991 Ford Ranger pickup with a pear rack [for carrying heavy loads]. It has about 132,000 kilometers.

IT WAS A CONTESTANT... a 30-year-old would win my clock, but I'd destroy any one in my age group.

HOLLYWOOD SQUARES WAS... one of the most enjoyable half-hours in the history of daytime TV. I was a smaller once and challenged a ringer. After the commercial break they announced I was right and called the contestant back. It was one of my proudest moments. Mind you, I was never asked to be a panelist again.

JEOPARDY! HAS GLOBAL APPEAL... because it's antiauthoritarian but not threatening. People want to see how they stack up against the brainy contestants, but if you get one wrong you're not going to die or have someone come to your door and take you away.

MY MISTAKE... ignore, but not forgotten.

## CDs | Older and wiser rock

DANNY MICHEL, TALKS FROM THE INVISIBLE MAN (Capricorn Music Recordings)



It's a soft ball that Danny Michel has never spent a day in the past, but he makes you believe he's done hard time in when I get out—

here about a rehabilitated prisoner with 15 days until his release. Talks from the Invisible Man, the fifth CD from the singer-songwriter who has now quit, is a full of heart and poignant narratives. Whether adopting the perspective of a family of doomed copper miners (*Thunder in the Mountain*), or just being loved, Michel, 33, ranges. Moving effortlessly between folk, country and alt-rock, his singing style is similar to both Tom Waits and fellow creative Canadian boy, Renshaw Workman. But when Workman overdoes it with flamboyant eccentricity, Michel has tight control over his material. Each tale he gets out an album, it lands on many Canadian radio Top 100 lists, but commercial success still eludes this sensitive man.

## SLOW ACTION PACT

(BMG)



Chen lost patience here somewhere in the late '70s when they moved away from group pop and ended on their love of '70s rock that live

for those who continued to follow these four Californians turned Torontonians through quirky and uneven efforts. After 10 years a huge pay off does see the direct pop of AC/DC and KISS that were often played together—there, in leaving their childhood adoration, they now at all ages a rock road of their own flavored, confident, raucous and mature. The lyrics are about settling down—because eventually the band members were going to have to face the fact that they're the same thing, getting gray hair, but still screw-kicking. That said, Sloan is not just about the rock. There are great power pop songs on this album, including the first single, the most of my life, and the two tracks (*Take A Moment*, *Fish Away*) by Jay Ferguson, the McCartney of the group. It's not enough to appease those who adamantly declare, "we like their early stuff better." But if Sloan can stop being in the past, so should we.

SHANDA PETER



## Film | Juliette Binoche's comedy career takes flight

From the love-lust student in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* to the scorned nurse in *The English Patient*, she's famous for playing fragile women with masochistic emotions. But now to face, there's nothing fragile about Juliette Binoche. She has a forthright manner, a challenging gaze and hearty laugh. She's wearing a sexy dress trimmed with black lace, but it seems like a costume, a free-form concession to publicity. Asked about her attitude to the business of looking beautiful, the 39-year-old French actress and former *L'Espresso* poster girl says, "In my everyday life, it doesn't matter to me. But when I come to work, it's very easy to be accepted—present, to have a little bit of makeup, and to dress."

In *Mr. Jack*, a French romantic comedy,

Binoche wears a ton of makeup. As Rose, a lovely beauty, her face is so thickly layered with cosmetics, she's almost unrecognizable. Rose is stranded in an airport overnight with Peter (Jean Reno), a grizzled govt. chief. He's obsessed with substance; she's obsessed with surface. And the oil and vinegar, they find a vicious chemistry. This Binoche film comedy "it was plausible, and ridiculous somehow, to stretch yourself into another person," she says. "In America, actors are used to that." Binoche is the most successful French actor of her generation to work in English, most recently landing her Galleo inflection to *Discohole*. In *Mr. Jack*, she plays French—but under a mask of makeup that's thicker than any cosmetic.

BRIAN D. JOHNSON

## TV | I love music, any kind of music

The *Week-End* is celebrating its 20th anniversary with a double special on *Week-End* (Aug. 25 and Sept. 8). Check out *Roberta* in a blue suit (Jackie) and *Week-End* in a black high-heeled pants. But also see the different faces of this legible have gone beneath the veneer of celebrity and gotten artists to talk about issues, ideas and images. Not an easy task.



Roberta and Jackie from the '80s

## Books | WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE

Maddie Zargartale super Douglas Coupland's eighth novel deals with the aftermath of a Columbine-like high school massacre. In *My Macabre Heart*, the author of novels including *Generation X* and *iDiot* is a *Cyber* tells the story through four characters, 18 years after three students fatally shot a number of their classmates in the cafeteria of a school in Vancouver, Coupland's home. The first of these murders is Cheryl, one of the victims, who reflects on her murder from beyond the pike, the second is Jason, whose Cheryl had secretly and had was facing a child with completing the quartet is a monster, who's in love with Jason, and long Jason's angry, broken father. Throughout, Coupland explores religious faith, the bonds of love and family, and the search for meaning. A sinister tone is established early on as Cheryl meets "Ten thousand of us who try to live a good and true life inside as far away from death as the Hubble Telescope." But, Coupland with Coupland's very wit and subtle observations, it adds up to be an inevitable year.



## BESTSELLERS

## Fiction

	WEEKS ON LIST
1. THE MURDER BOOK BY P. J. RABBIT (D)	2
2. THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME BY MARK HAZARET (D)	3
3. THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME BY MARK HAZARET (D)	4
4. THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME BY MARK HAZARET (D)	5
5. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	6
6. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	7
7. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	8
8. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	9
9. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	10
10. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	11

## Non-fiction

1. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	4
2. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	5
3. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	6
4. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	7
5. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	8
6. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	9
7. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	10
8. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	11
9. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	12
10. HAZARD EPIC, by David Byrne (D)	13

11 weeks on list  
compiled by Bruce Fretts



## OTTAWA'S LOST SOULS

Some Liberal MPs are making the same-sex marriage debate all about them

**TRUST YOUR MEMBER** of Parliament to root out discrimination. The debate over homosexual marriage has provoked a heady band of MPs and senators to stand up—at last—for the rights of an oppressed, downtrodden minority.

There's one  
Talk about missing the point.

You see, courts in Ontario and British Columbia have ruled that laws prohibiting gay marriage are in effect to the Charter right of equality. On the day the Ontario Court of Appeal made its decision, gay people started getting married in Toronto. The federal government had to decide, right away, whether this was a bad thing, requiring its justices to stop the weddings and a Supreme Court appeal, or a good thing, requiring a law to spread the new practice of gay marriage across the land.

The government decided it's a good thing. I happen to agree. Shout your opinion, letter writer!

But enough about me. We are gathered here today to consider the public spectacle of MPs who can't quite bring themselves to say they don't want gay people to get married. That would sound a little insensitive. So they have to find another reason to vote against the government's bill. The excuse they have found is that somebody is being mean to them.

In an odd season in Ottawa, MPs, fogged around by the democratic deficit-busting Paul Martin, are trying to find a lot to like. They have ideas and nobody listens to them. They have talents and nobody puts them in cabinet. They grow lives and the courts strike them down! It's all so humiliating.

Well, they're not going to take it anymore. The gay-rights movement took a giant leap forward with the Stonewall riots in 1969. Now the MP's rights movement is doing some name-calling of its own. Too bad if a gay-rights movement has to cool its heels for a bit; the parliamentarians' new slogan is "What About ME?"

It's not appealing the Ontario Court of

Appeal decision, the Prime Minister looks his concern to the House and with the Liberal caucus, an aggrieved Joe Volpe, the Liberal MP for Richmond-Lessex, wrote in the *Globe and Mail*: "The troubling imbalance must be addressed if Parliament is not to fade into irrelevance."

Sen. Laidlaw's Roger Galloway accused the judges of using "the Charter of Rights as a battering ram against Parliament. We ought as well fold up Parliament and let the judges run things."



The downtowned parliamentarianry class is saying, in effect: if you don't think your rights are being respected, don't go running to the courts. You'll hear the feelings of somebody in Ottawa: "As members of Parliament, we feel a little neglected." Senator Anne Cools said the other day.

So instead of going to court, what you should do is tag the sleeve of some MP or senator and hope he'll take your case to Parliament. And if it takes forever to get any satisfaction, because your MP or senator believes you're just a wee bit icy, then too bad for you.

It is a particularly odd line of argument coming from Liberals. The conscience of Pierre Trudeau's legacy is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which exists precisely to serve as a shield against Parliament's excesses and a battering ram against its complacency. Nonetheless, Cools and Galloway have asked for a chance to argue their point when the Supreme Court considers the government's bill on gay marriage. The Supreme should grant the request. Partly because parliamentarians do indeed deserve to be heard. Partly because judges deserve a laugh, too.

Cools told reporters she will argue that because "marriage" is mentioned in the Constitution—not defined, just mentioned—any change to the institution of marriage requires a constitutional amendment. Since fisheries and schools are mentioned in the constitution too, I suppose from now on we're going to need a constitutional amendment to close a library or build a school. Anne, if you're feeling neglected, perhaps you should act less like somebody who's profoundly worth neglecting.

When Galloway's lawyers make his case before the justices, perhaps one of the Supreme will quote back some wise words once spoken by Galloway himself. On Feb. 21, 2000, he made a very good speech in the Commons in support of Bill C-23, which extended spousal benefits to same-sex couples.

Parliament was acting because the courts had forced its hand, thus he now, Galloway, while emphasizing there is now that he does not support gay marriage, demolished the broader argument that courts must stay out of Parliament's business. "Some might choose to denigrate the Supreme Court ruling by stating that the bogeyman of judge-made law," he said. "This line of thought is extremely dangerous. By depicting such characterizations, critics are effectively delegitimizing the entire judicial system."

He concluded by saying: "This is about a societal shift. People who are labelled homosexual or lesbian are part of society. They should be recognized as part of society and extended the same benefits and obligations as those we extend to others."

Precisely so. This drive is about rights. Almost everyone knows whose rights it's about. Everyone enjoys a few lost souls in Ottawa.

To comment: backpage@mclean.ca

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